

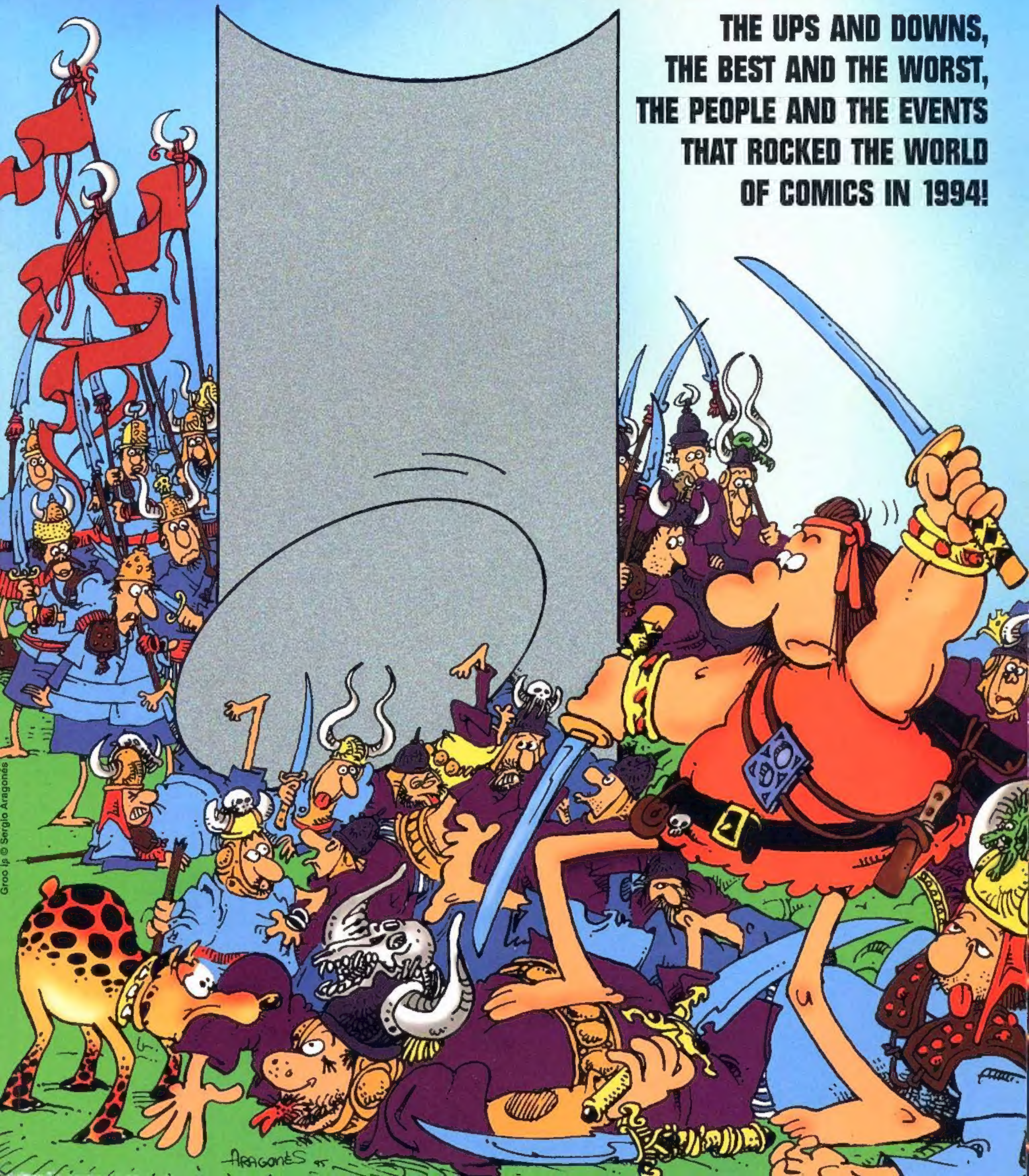
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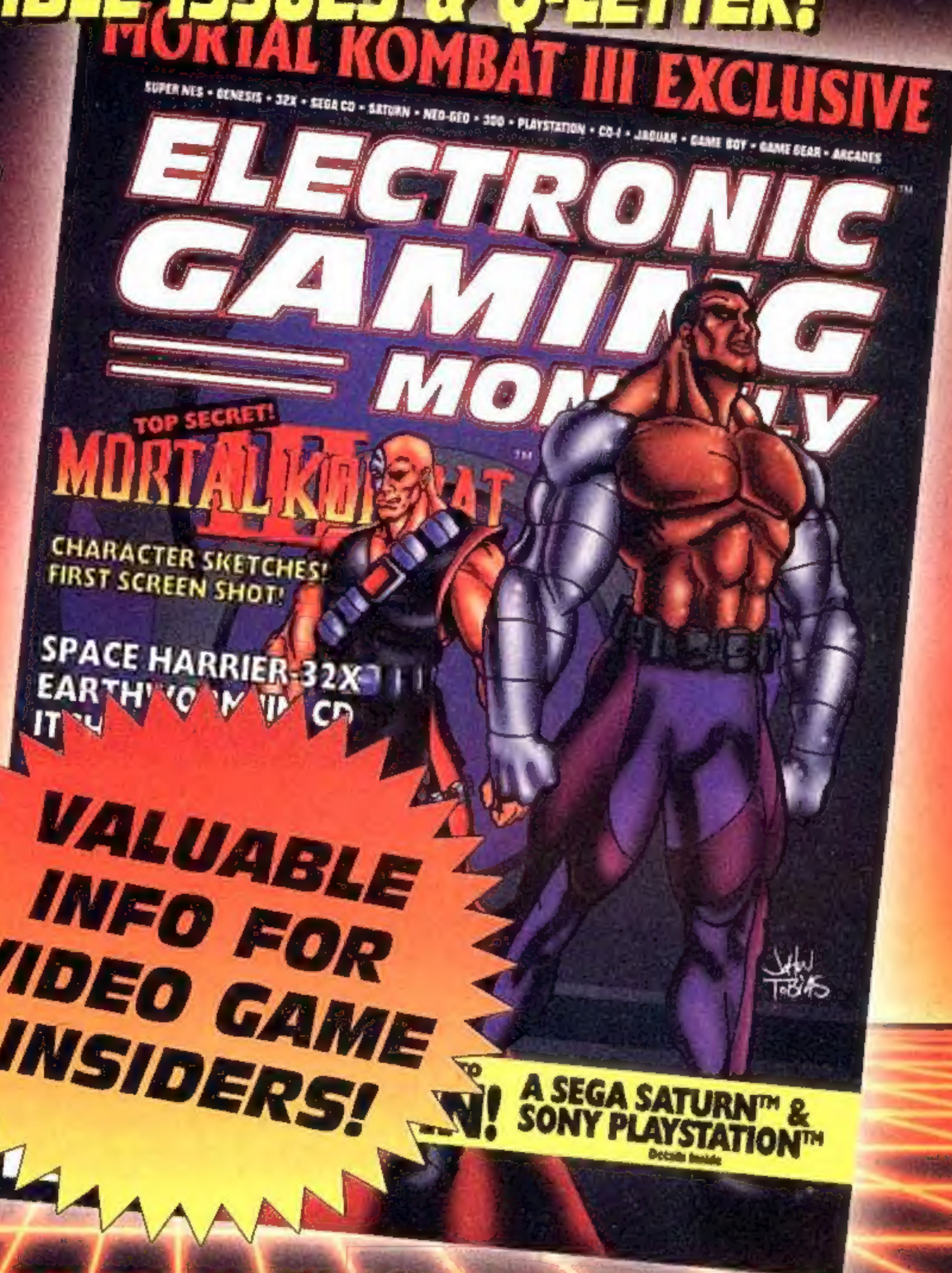
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HHSC7

RANTINGS

THE YEAR IN COMICS? LET'S TAKE A LOOK...



I think one of the reasons so many of us enjoy comics is because of the sense of their untapped potential. If the medium doesn't carry the legacy of say, music or movies, it also doesn't bear the burden of being as omnipresently tiresome as either of them.

The down side to all that untapped potential is the reason *why* it's untapped: because so few people have bothered to figure out how to go about tapping into it.

Right now, this medium is dominated by superheroes. Now, in and of itself, that doesn't have to be a bad thing: If somebody decides they want to write or

draw superheroes, it would be phony or false to demand that they try to do *Sandman*. (Besides, any genre that can give us *Marvels* and *Madman* can't be completely bereft of merit.) On the other hand, there are a lot of people in this medium who *don't* want to do superheroes, who have no interest in them and never will. Don't they deserve the same opportunity to succeed as someone who thinks comics begin and end with *Superman* or *The Incredible Hulk*?

Over the last year, we've interviewed a lot of people in the pages of *HERO ILLUSTRATED*, ranging from renowned mainstream superhero creators to creators whose work you might never have seen. (Some of them even pop up within the pages of *this* magazine.) That's what we think it means to be a magazine about comics. Not a magazine about "hot" comics. A magazine about comics.

We've also tried to take a more active view of the way the industry works during the last year, from an expanded news section to articles examining the ever-shifting terrain at companies like Marvel and Image. If we dwell too much on the business side of comics for some folks' liking, well, think of it as a few gentle words of caution: We'd be quite happy if someone reading this magazine became the next Jack Kirby—up to the point where they create a new universe that keeps a company alive and get ripped off something fierce in the bargain.

Business. Love it or hate it, it's part of comics, too—and knowing the way somebody does business can go a long way toward explaining why they do the things they do, whether you're talking about Terry Stewart or Mike Richardson or Dave Sim or Glenn Danzig. It can go a long way toward explaining why the comic book market could sustain a company that publishes 100-plus books a month and barely sustain a company that puts out two.

What does this have to do with you, gentle reader? Simply this: The events of the last year suggest that soon there will be major changes in the way comics are bought and sold. That will affect the way your favorite creator—whether they're internationally famous or locally obscure—does his or her job. Which, in turn, will affect the way any of us are able to tap into that untapped potential.

Earlier this year we received a letter expressing surprise that some of the books we'd reviewed were non-superhero in nature. "Don't you think," the letter asked, "if these books were so great they would have bigger circulation?"

Yeah, you'd think so, wouldn't you? Let's see what we can do about that.

—Steve Darnall
Editor

HERO SPECIAL EDITION

1994: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Volume 8, Number 1

A WARRIOR PUBLICATIONS PERIODICAL

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DISTRIBUTED BY:

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HERO SPECIAL (ISSN #1071-4944) is published by Warrior Publications, 1920 Highland Ave., Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148. Single issue rates: \$3.95. Third Class Postage paid Plattsburg, NY. The editors and publisher are not responsible for unsolicited materials. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the expressed written permission of Warrior Publications, Inc. Copyright © 1994, Warrior Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. All materials listed in this magazine are subject to manufacturers change and the publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes. All copyrights and trademarks are the property of the companies.

Printed in Canada

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SPECIAL THANKS: John Born, Joe Desris, Harlan and Susan Ellison, Dick Sprang, Ty Templeton, Meg Guttman
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HHSC7



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1994 may well be remembered as the year everything changed. For good or bad, the events of the past 12 months will have a long-term effect on how comics are made, how comics are sold and where all the money will go.

19 TALKING TO THE MAJOR PLAYERS

Having interviewed everyone from movie stars to controversial cartoonists, *HERO* presents conversations, both old and new, with 12 of the industry's most popular topics of discussion.

40 WHAT HAPPENED IN YOUR FAVORITE COMICS

You read 'em, you love 'em, but how are you supposed to keep track? Who's alive, who's dead, who's a clone and what the hell happened to the time stream? Relief is at hand as *HERO* presents a summary of the story lines in all your favorite titles.

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"What, you mean you read comic books? For a living?" The *HERO* staff picks 49 books that got (and held) our attention.

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1994 saw the passing of some of the giants of the comic book and entertainment industry. *HERO* takes a look back to pay tribute and say good-bye.

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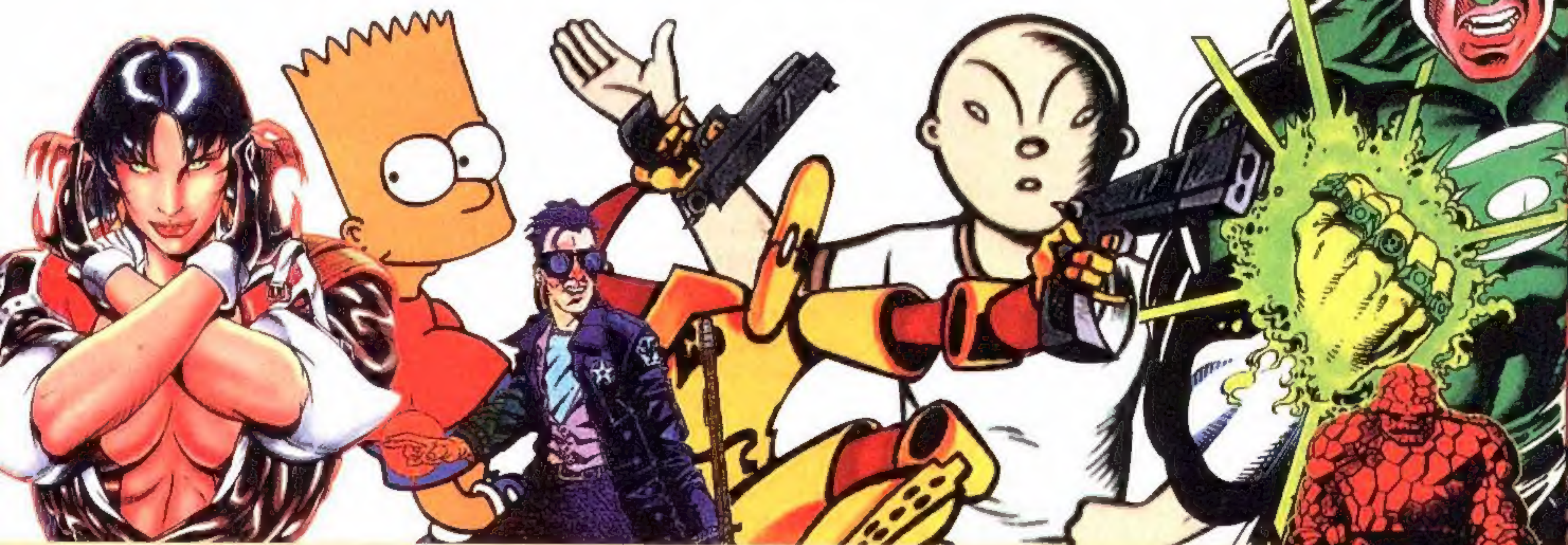
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—Andy Mangels, fastest correspondent in the West, on the year comics went Hollywood.

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81 THE BEST IN READER ART

—As if we would be anywhere without our adoring public? A look back at 12 months of fevered imaginings with a cast of dozens.



A MEMORABLE QUOTE FROM 1994:

"David, if I had to go down the highway in a white Bronco, I would want you to be my driver—because I know you would go faster than 35 miles per hour."

—Garry Shandling to David Letterman



THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY

IT WAS A SHAKY YEAR FOR THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY— BUT WAS IT SHAKEN UP OR GETTING THE SHAKEDOWN?



TRENDERS



For the comic book industry, 1994 was the year of living dangerously. Small conventions took on large ones; artists took on the long arm of the laws; big companies took on the direct market.

There were major tremors, events that suggested (or

threatened) changing the way the comic book industry runs, but no walls collapsed, no major structures tumbled. Not yet, anyway. Next year looks like it might be another story.

The intrepid folks at *HERO* have gathered all the facts, rumors and rumblings and tossed them into one giant stew. Hope you're hungry...

TRENDS

CONVENTIONS GO A.P.E.

You don't have to be a genius to realize that small-press, independent black-and-white books simply don't predominate the market against splashy, colored superhero books. There are number of facts and theories one can suggest for that, but the truth of the matter is that more than a few independent publishers (and self-publishers) have become more than a little dissatisfied with the lack of access provided by the direct market. That dissatisfaction was compounded at the

beginning of the year when Diamond and Capital City—the largest of the national distributors—announced that they were reducing the window of opportunity for late books from 90 days to 30. In and of itself, that's not too horrible; after all, if you've had to wait two months for a book to come out, chances are that you'll have found plenty of other ways to spend your money by the time said book actually hits the streets, which leaves distributors and retailers high and dry.

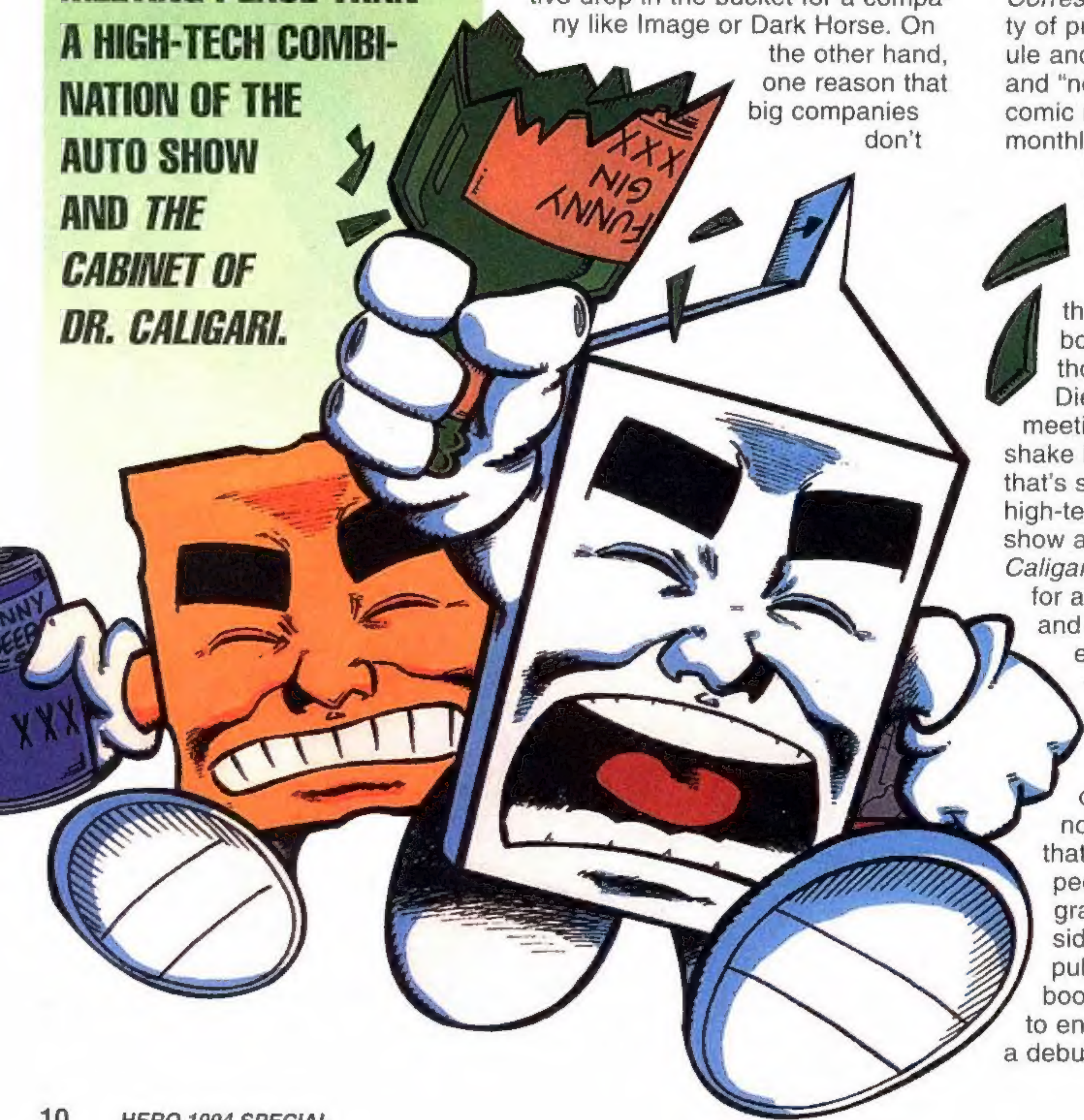
Then Capital City went one step further by implementing cash penalties on late books: From here on in, it would cost \$500 to cancel the initial purchase order and another \$750 to resolicit the book in question. That meant if a publisher was more than a month late with a given book, they were out \$1250. Now, as Dan Vado has pointed out (as have a slew of his small-press brethren), paying \$1250 would be a comparative drop in the bucket for a company like Image or Dark Horse. On

the other hand, one reason that big companies don't

have too many late books is because they can call in last-minute substitutes; if Stuart Immomen can't draw *Superman*, you get somebody else. That's not a luxury small-press creators and publishers enjoy. If James Owen or Evan Dorkin break an arm, then *Starchild* and *Milk & Cheese* just stop. Martin Wagner, the creator and publisher of *Hepcats*, summed up the feelings of a lot of people when he suggested that the new fines would "annihilate small guys who can't afford it." Capital City responded in *Internal Correspondence* that there are plenty of publishers who make a schedule and stick to it (like Dave Sim), and "nowhere is it written that every comic must be published on a monthly basis. What's right for Marvel and Dark Horse may not work for 'Garage Productions.'"

Adding to the problems small publishers face was the fact that the major comic book conventions—specifically those in Chicago and San Diego—have become less a meeting place where you can shake hands with the pros (though that's still possible) and more a high-tech combination of the auto show and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. By 1993, it wasn't enough for a publisher to set up a table and three chairs; now there were enormous visual displays, deafening multimedia affairs and spandex-clad models handing out assorted paraphernalia (except for comics, of course). The argument—not an entirely invalid one—is that such extravaganzas bring in people who need a little flash to grab their attention. The downside is that if you're merely a publisher with some worthwhile books to promote, you're likely to end up looking like the wart on a debutante's hand compared to

THE MAJOR COMIC BOOK CONVENTIONS HAVE BECOME LESS A MEETING PLACE THAN A HIGH-TECH COMBINATION OF THE AUTO SHOW AND THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI.



INTRIGUE AT THE CBLDF

What's truly sad about the obscenity conviction of *Boiled Angel* creator/publisher Michael Diana is it continues a disturbing trend of Floridians getting their First Amendment rights trampled upon. (Remember 2 Live Crew, anybody? Boy, did *that* corrupt our lives.) What's even sadder is that Diana's attorneys and friends suggest they could have beaten the rap with additional help from the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

So what happened? Here's the story from Diana's attorneys: Months went by without any word or money from their main contact at the CBLDF. The contact promised to supply more money and expert witnesses. Months went by and neither showed up, and the letters the attorneys sent were never answered—in fact, it took an innocent phone call in February from the CBLDF's then-new executive director for either side to figure out something was askew. One magazine received a written statement defending the attorney's CBLDF contact, only to learn that the contact's superiors had no knowledge of *that* either. The next month, the jury ruled against Diana and soon after, the contact in question resigned his post. The Diana case was a rare blight on the CBLDF's record. It wasn't a great day for the Constitution, either.

someone who's got a smoke machine and a waterfall—and as such, you're liable to be the hand that's hidden from sight. Slave Labor Publisher Dan Vado expressed the frustrations of a lot of independent publishers when he complained that for all the benefits of the direct market, too many people still didn't know the smaller companies existed, and even if they did, they didn't know what to do with them. The time had come, Vado felt, for "a marquis event for the alternative press. A guy who's just doing a little minicomic can sit there and shine on his own and promote his work to people who have a like mind." No flash, no giant video screens, no leotard-wearing babes handing out pogs, just comic book creators and their work. What a concept!

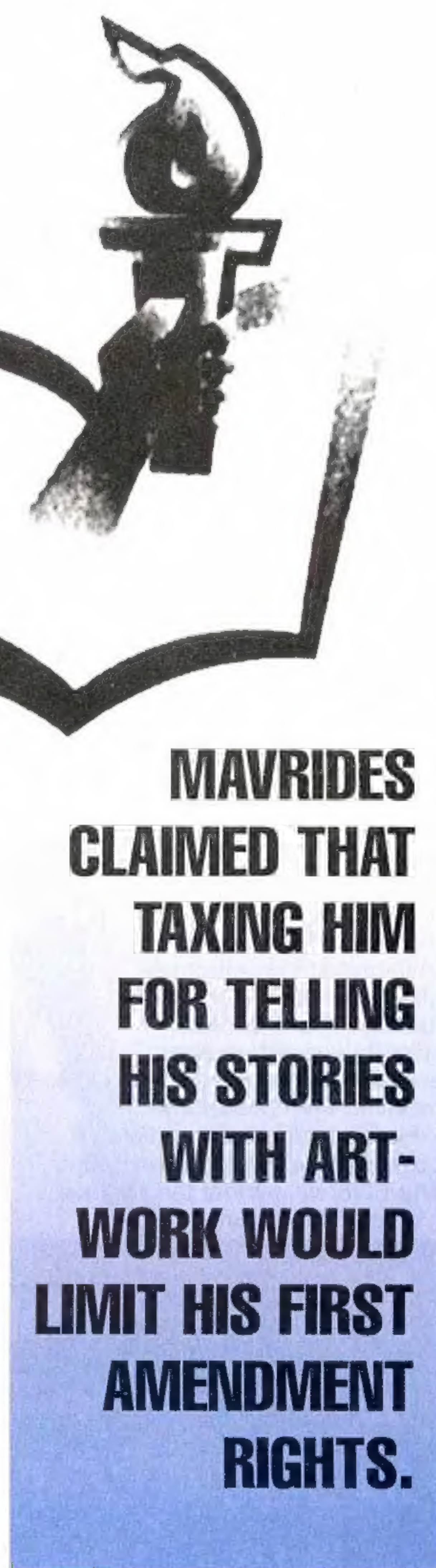
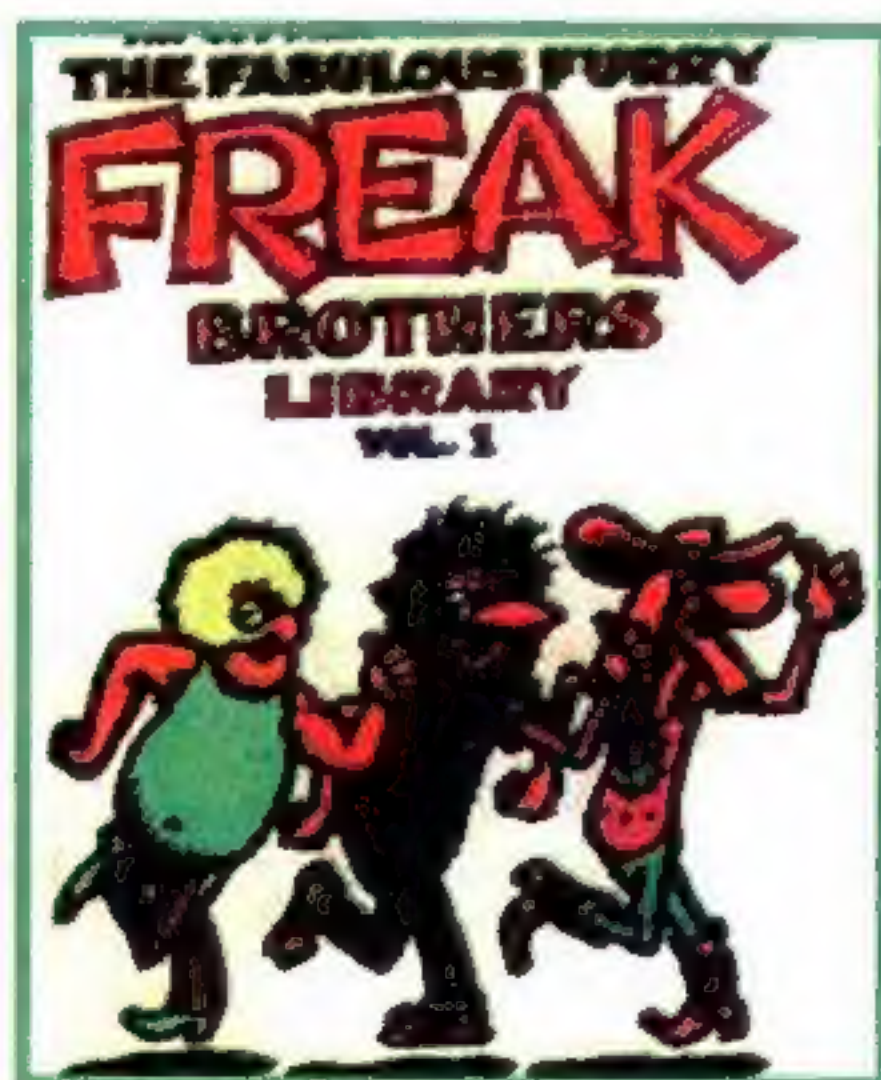
So it came to pass in June that San Jose, CA, played host to Vado's first Alternative Press Expo (A.P.E.), which featured no fewer than 90 exhibit booths from publishers and self-publishers alike. According to

reports, more than 1,000 people attended the one-day affair—which is doubly impressive when you realize that San Jose is not the largest city in California by a long shot.

The event may not have been a financial success (Vado reported losing about three grand on the deal), but for Vado it accomplished two things: 1) It alerted the market that you could arouse interest (and revenue) from an area of comics that had previously been confined to the "I can't get rid of it," section of most comic stores, and 2) It alerted the independent press that if they had to look after themselves, at least they knew it could be done. Now, in Vado's words, one had to see "how well the baton passing comes down." If the current signs are any indication, the baton-passing's going very well indeed: Dave Sim (who, ironically, has made a career out of insisting that you don't have to work for another publisher, not even Dan Vado) took the momentum to spearhead 1995's "Spirits of Independence" tour, which is scheduled to cover the better part of the country and the year. As for A.P.E., that particular baton has been picked up by the San Diego ComiCon, which promises to give it additional exposure and resources. If A.P.E. wasn't the first of its kind (there was the Small Press Expo last spring in Bethesda, MD), it wasn't going to be the last.

CALIFORNIA SCREAMIN': PAUL MAVRIDES AT THE BOE

When you buy a comic book, do you *look* at it or do you *read* it? This has nothing to do with speculation;



**MAVRIDES
CLAIMED THAT
TAXING HIM
FOR TELLING
HIS STORIES
WITH ART-
WORK WOULD
LIMIT HIS FIRST
AMENDMENT
RIGHTS.**

rather, it's the center of a debate between one artist and the state of California—and the outcome will affect the way California artists and publishers—from Last Gasp to Image—do their business.

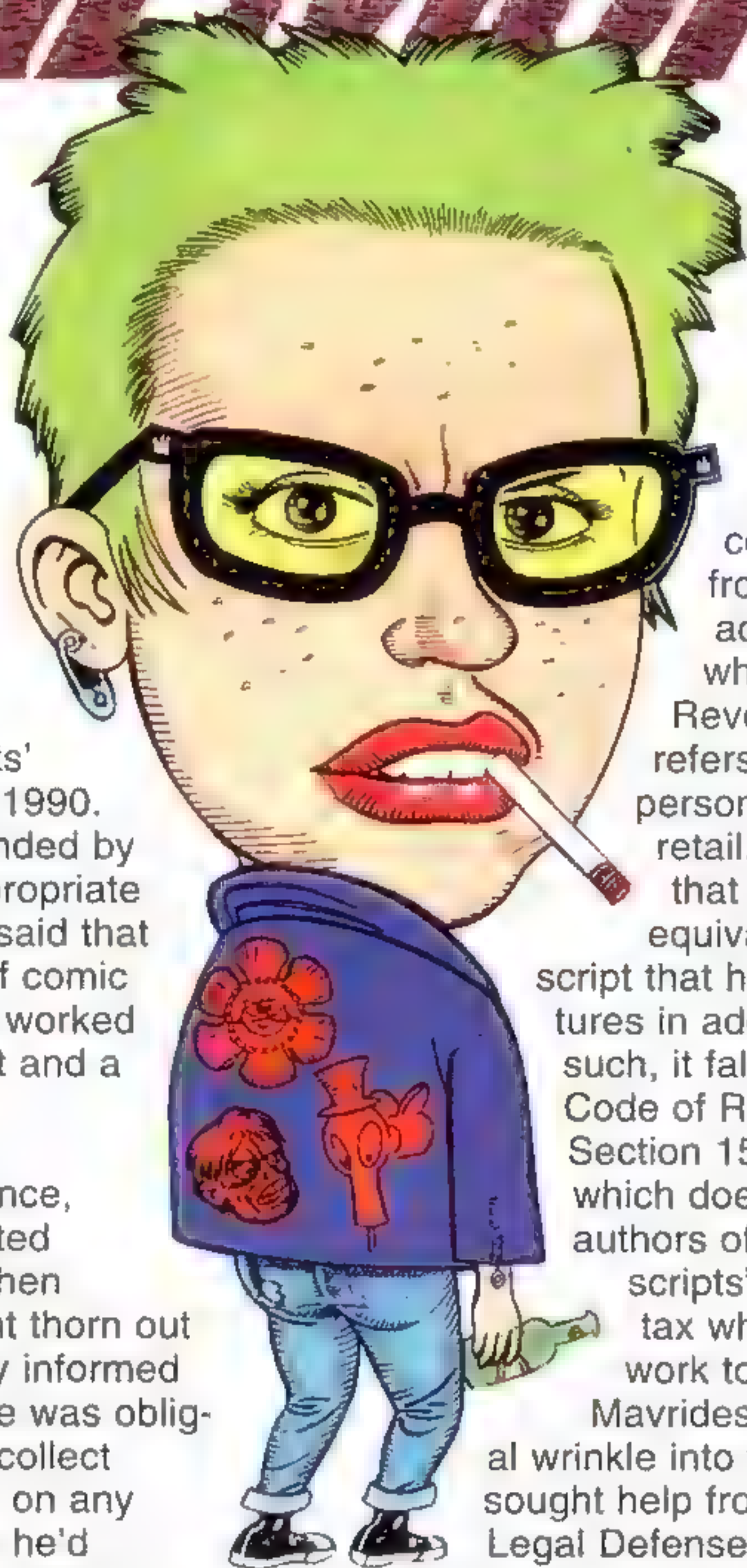
At the center of the debate is Paul Mavrides, best known as the co-writer of *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* and a longtime member of the Church of the SubGenius. Like most of this year's tremors, the Mavrides case owed a lot to events

TRENDY

of previous years. In Mavrides' case, it began in 1991 when a computer error at the California Board of Equalization (BOE) suggested that Mavrides had made an extra \$80,000 in artists' royalties during 1990. Mavrides responded by sending the appropriate paperwork and said that as a producer of comic book pages, he worked as both an artist and a writer.

Satisfied by Mavrides' evidence, the BOE corrected their error, but then pulled a different thorn out of the rose: they informed Mavrides that he was obligated to bill and collect sales tax based on any and all royalties he'd received from publishers.

Here's where the question we posed earlier becomes important. The BOE claims that the pages a



comic book artist supplies to a publisher are, in fact, "camera-ready artwork," that happens to mix words with pictures. As such, when a publisher receives comic book pages from an artist, they're actually receiving what the California Revenue and Tax Code refers to as "tangible personal property at retail." Mavrides claims that his pages are the equivalent of a manuscript that happens to have pictures in addition to words; as such, it falls under California Code of Regulations title 18, Section 1543 (b)(1)(a)—which does not require authors of "original manuscripts" to charge sales tax when selling their work to a publisher.

Mavrides threw an additional wrinkle into the works when he sought help from the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund and the ACLU, claiming that taxing him for telling his stories with artwork would limit his ability to exercise his First Amendment rights—after all, he

WE'RE DEAD, JIM: A LIST OF COMIC BOOK COMPANIES THAT SHUT THEIR DOORS (EITHER FOR NOW OR FOR KEEPS) IN '94

**AXIS
APPLE
BLACKBALL
DAGGER
DEFIANT
FANTAGOR
MAJESTIC
OMINOUS
SILVER MOON
TRIUMPHANT**

**NOT AT ALL WELL:
CONTINUITY
ECLIPSE**



IF THE BOE PREVAILS, IT WILL MEAN THAT EVERY CALIFORNIA CARTOONIST—BE IT ERIK LARSEN OR MARY FLEENER—WOULD HAVE TO CHARGE TAXES TO ANY CALIFORNIA-BASED PUBLISHER FOR EVERY PROJECT THEY DID.

reasons, if he's got to collect royalties for turning in a story to a publisher, why don't pictureless storytellers like Stephen King or Tom Clancy have to do the same? To Mavrides, the BOE's decision must have felt an awful lot like being told that all speech is equal, except the kind with word balloons.

Here's where the argument gets interesting: Are your comics art with words or are they stories with art? When Mavrides puts together an issue of *Freak Brothers*, is he a writer who tells his story with the help of art or are his stories merely a form of mixed media? Mavrides' action indicates he considers himself in the former camp, and plenty of California-based comic creators—including Stan Lee, Frank Miller, Nina Paley, Bill Griffith, Dan Clowes and *L.A. Times* editorial cartoonist Paul Conrad—have lined up behind him to echo those sentiments.

Some people reading this might be inclined to dismiss this case by virtue of the fact that the artist the BOE selected as their initial sacrificial lamb isn't the biggest-selling artist out there. After all, if you're really into *Sin City* or *Savage Dragon*, why should you care about some underground cartoonist?

Here's why: If the BOE prevails, it will mean that every California cartoonist—be it Erik Larsen or Mary Fleener—would have to charge taxes to any California-based publisher for every project they did, whether it's *Image* or *Slave Labor*. (The same would most likely apply to illustrators of children's books, whose product also relies on a combination of text and pictures.) California publishers—be they *Image* or *Slave Labor*—would pay the same amount in taxes for a page of artwork, regardless of how well the book sold. You can see what that would do to the smaller publishers: "Pay the same amount for a smaller return in the direct market? Oh, get me some of *that*!"

As we go to press, the case has gone before the BOE appeals review section, but no decision has been forthcoming, and even if one was, Mavrides has suggested, it wouldn't be the final one. It seems entirely possible that this case will, in due time, make it to a courtroom. If it does, comic creators and publishers will owe it to themselves to lavish as much attention on it as the rest of the world has lavished on O.J. Simpson's trial.

One has to wonder if they will.

YOU SAY YOU WANT A MARVELUTION...

If you view the current comic book market as a battlefield, then consider Marvel Comics the company that fired the most warning shots—and the company whose actions may finally spark the rebellion that, for better or worse, would change the way you buy comics.

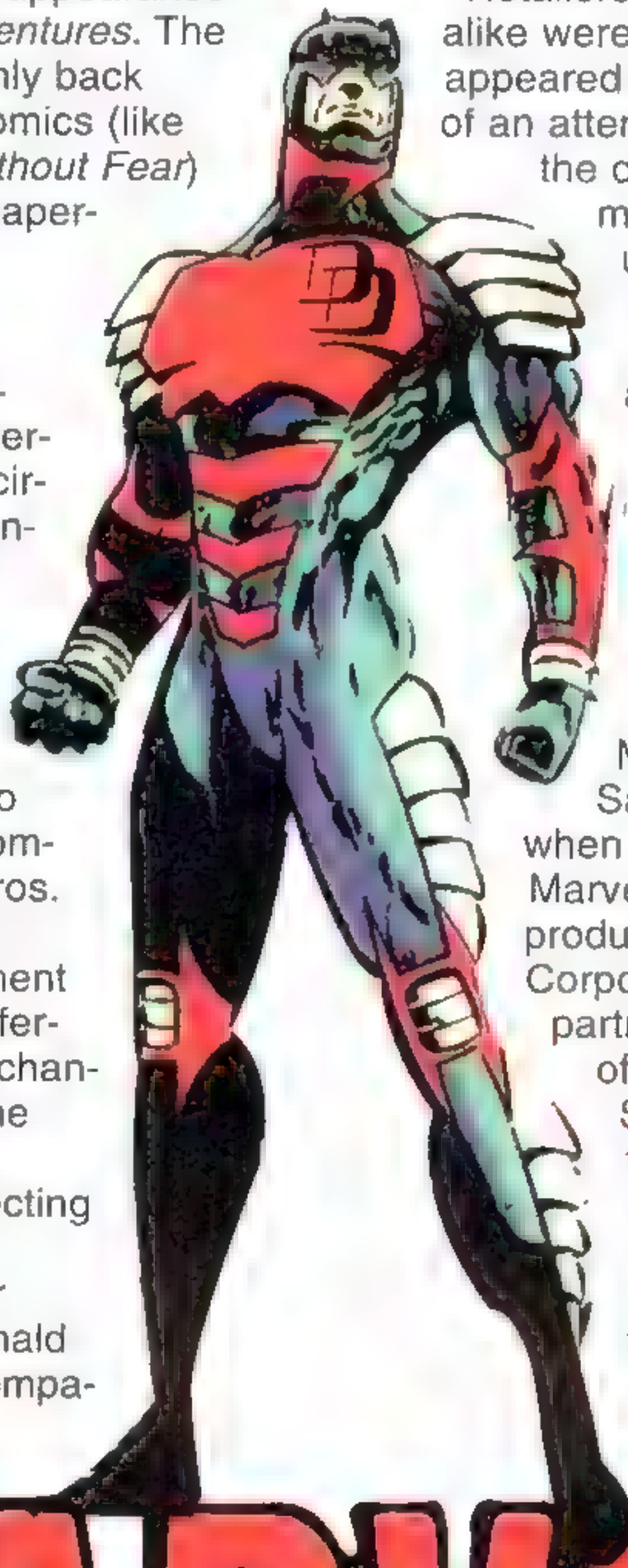
The first bomb went off in March of this year when the Marvel Mart catalogue made its first appearance in copies of *X-Men Adventures*. The catalogue offered not only back issues of hard-to-find comics (like *Marvels* or *The Man Without Fear*) but "out of print" trade paperbacks and promotional posters.

Now, it's not unprecedented for the entertainment industry to offer merchandise in a way that circumvents the usual channels—anybody who's picked up a Garth Brooks CD or a copy of *Back To The Future* from McDonald's can attest to that. There are even "company" stores (Warner Bros. and Disney are obvious examples) who supplement a comic shop without offering the exact same merchandise all the way down the line. Some comic book retailers admitted suspecting Marvel would alter their marketing methods ever since Revlon owner Ronald Perelman bought the compa-

ny in 1990. What they *didn't* expect was that the catalogue would come inside copies of *X-Men Adventures* that would be shipped to the *direct market*. In other words, customers could go into their local comic book store, buy a copy of *X-Men Adventures* and find a catalog that would tell them they didn't have to go into their comic book store. (At one point in the catalog, Spider-Man captures some shoplifters in a comic book store and remarks, "This shopping thing is way too dangerous!")

Retailers and distributors alike were up in arms at what appeared to them to be less of an attempt to supplement the direct market and

more of an attempt to usurp it. The confusion that reigned among distributors and retailers alike (Diamond's Bill Neuhaus said he'd never seen so many calls come in so fast on one topic) was abetted by Marvel's Direct Sales Department when they said the Marvel Mart was the product of Marvel's Corporate Marketing Department. Marvel Chief of Operations Terry Stewart later admitted to *Capital City's Internal Correspondence* that he "never saw it in its full form until it got in a book."



MARVEL COMICS

TRENDERS

Finally, on March 18, Marvel V.P. of Direct Sales Matt Ragone issued a statement which said, although the company "acted in good faith," Marvel Mart catalogs would no longer be included in direct-market books.

But why even suggest a separate arrangement in the first place? There was speculation within the industry (eventually confirmed by Stewart himself) that Marvel was planning to open a handful (if not a national chain) of Marvel stores, much like the aforementioned Warner Bros. and Disney stores that dot the landscape at shopping centers across the land.

Again, there's no reason in and of itself that such a store would kill the direct market, particularly if, as Stewart suggested, the Marvel stores would stock "products that wouldn't be available anywhere else." Some might even argue that Marvel stores could give a mainstream boost to the merchandise available from direct-market stores.

In the direct market, however, there was some concern that Marvel might have planned all this as a precursor to simply pulling up stakes and getting out of the direct market completely. That fear was given additional fuel in mid-May when Marvel debuted their own program on the Home Shopping Network, and even more so in December

when the company announced that they had purchased Heroes' World Distribution. A comic book company with their own distributor? As the narrator of the *Batman* TV show would say, "What's *this*?"

One thing that's worth remembering in all this is that Marvel *the company* is not nearly as reliant on Marvel *the comic book publisher* for its success as it was, say, a decade ago. In 1988, comic books accounted for 90 percent of Marvel's total sales; five years later, that amount was below 40 percent. The purchase of Fleer in 1992 gave the company a major stake in the trading card market.

(Company reports for 1993 indicated that Fleer was responsible for over half of Marvel's reported revenue.) This year, Marvel also entered into agreements with Universal Studios Florida (to create a "Marvel Theme Park") and Harvey Comics (to assume

Harvey's publishing and distribution responsibilities), and made three other major purchases: In June, Marvel bought the Panini Group, which not only gave them one of the world's leading producers of stickers and sticker albums (including, ironically, the *Batman: The Animated Series* sticker album) but additional access to overseas and world markets.

Then, in November, Malibu Comics—which had been rumored as being for sale for months—was bought by Marvel. This not only allowed Marvel to absorb a competing superhero universe, it also gave them additional inroads into the film, video games and CD-ROM markets.

With the frenetic goings-on on the business end of

Marvel, it seemed strange that the one area where no radical changes had been made was in the editorial end. That changed in October when Terry Stewart announced the "Marvelution," which amounted to a restructuring of editorial staff—specifically, the removal of Tom DeFalco as editor in chief.

DeFalco's "lateral move" (he was offered



SMOKE, SMOKE, SMOKE THAT CIGARETTE ... BUT DO IT WHEN YOU'RE OUT OF THE FRAME

When a 7-year-old boy complained to the *New England Journal of Medicine* about the fact that the Marvel Masterpieces trading card set featured characters smoking, Marvel President Terry Stewart announced that Marvel would "omit smoking materials from all future Marvel card releases." The Human Torch, whose career has been built around his ability to smoke, had no comment.

JIM CARREY INTERVIEW, TAKE 62...



How do you handle the pressures of sudden fame? If you're Jim Carrey, who rocketed into the upper stratosphere last summer in *The Mask*, you handle the pressure of multiple interviews by saying more or less *the same thing every time*. It's true—in no less than five interviews did he state that playing *The Mask* was like "Fred Astaire on acid."

the job of Senior Vice President of Marvel Publishing; he turned it down to return to freelance work) brought to an end months of speculation about his job future at the Big M. Not because he was a bad editor—that's largely in the eye of the individual anyway—but the playing field had changed so thoroughly in the seven years since he took the job that one might suggest that the old description of an editor in chief was simply outmoded.

It's not inconceivable to suggest that Marvel execs had figured that out when the company went public with its stock in 1991. Now, for the first time, Marvel was beholden to a group of stockholders who didn't care if *Marvels* won any Eisners or if the *Fantastic Four* movie sucked. All most of them really had to care about was that they'd bought shares on the premise that their company would maintain its grip on the marketshare (and unlike DC, Marvel didn't have the luxury of couching itself in the greater structure of Time Warner).

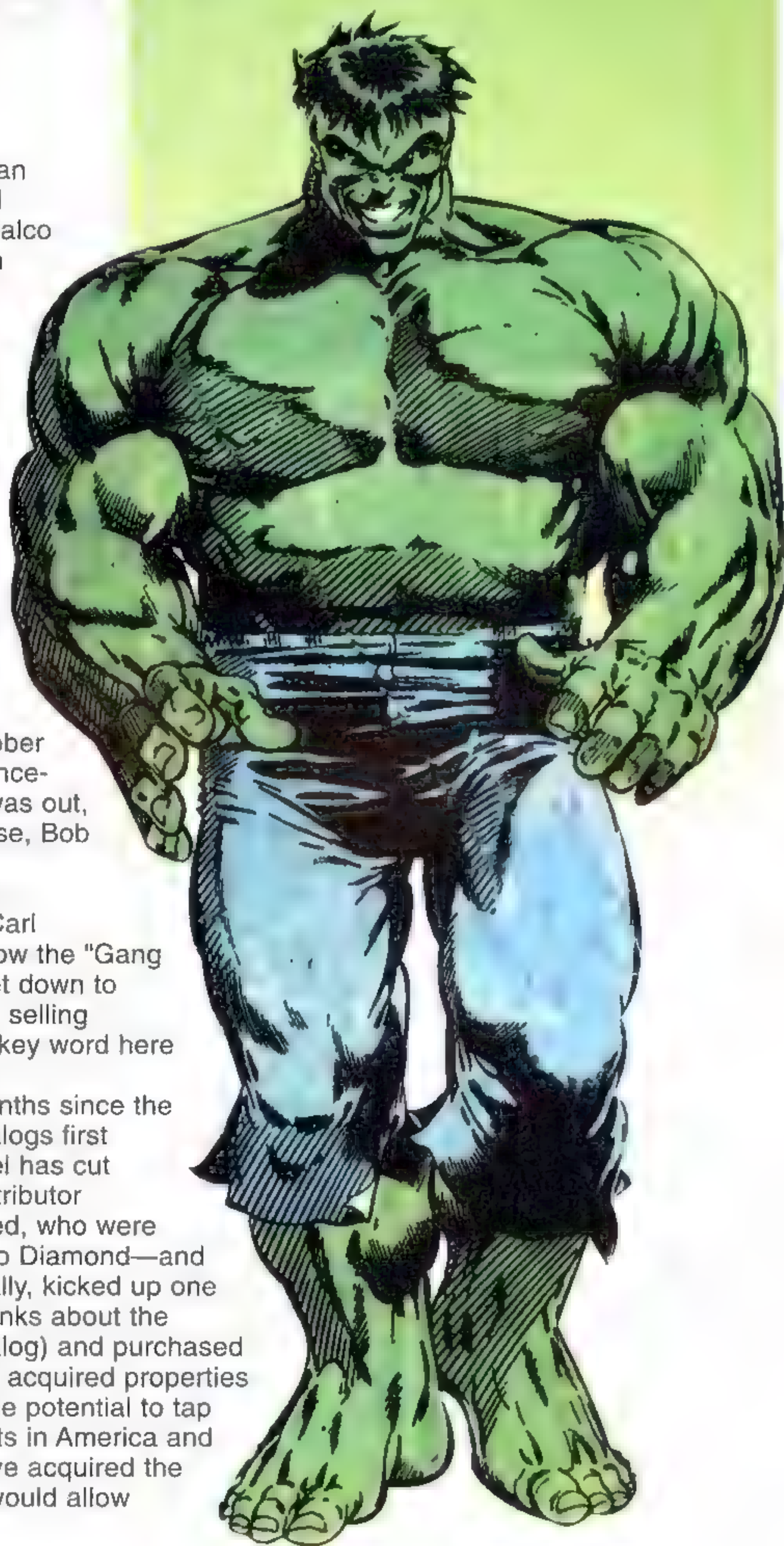
Marvel's initial response was to drastically increase their comic output, at one point putting more than 100 books out a *month*. Now, it doesn't matter how capable you are or how much you love comics, there's simply no way on earth that you can faithfully oversee quality control on 100-plus titles a month. DeFalco may have thought he was taking the same playing field as his predecessors, but the rules had changed radically. It was as if Marvel had prepared him for the Indy 500 by giving him the family station wagon—and, to extend

what's probably an already awkward metaphor, if DeFalco blew a tire or ran out of gas along the way, there were a lot more people taking notice now. It didn't help DeFalco's cause that the company stock had dropped nearly 20 points between November of '93 and May of '94.

Finally, in October came the announcement: DeFalco was out, and Bobbie Chase, Bob Harras, Mark Gruenwald, Bob Budiansky and Carl Potts were in. Now the "Gang of Five" could get down to concentrating on selling books—and the key word here is "concentrate."

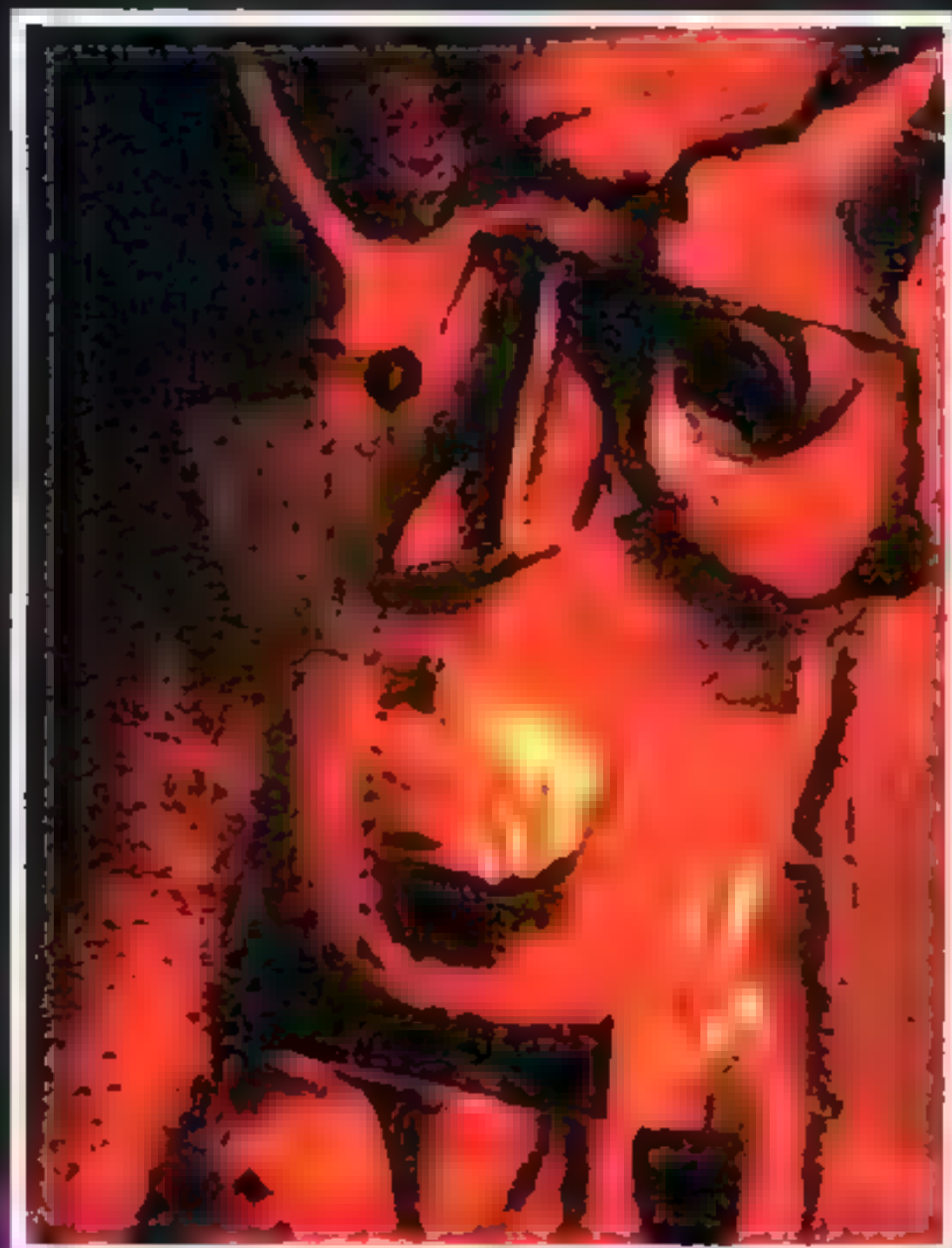
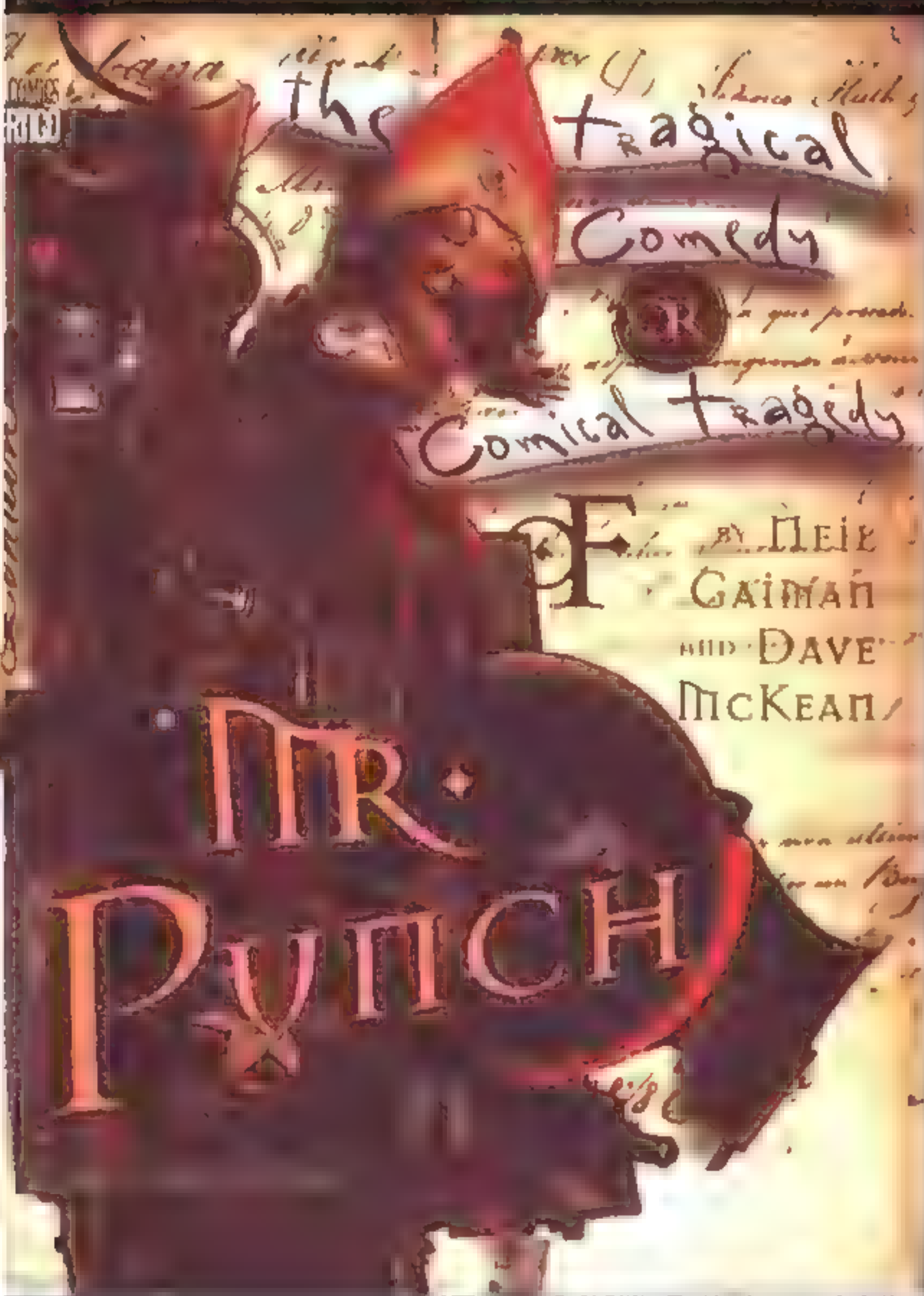
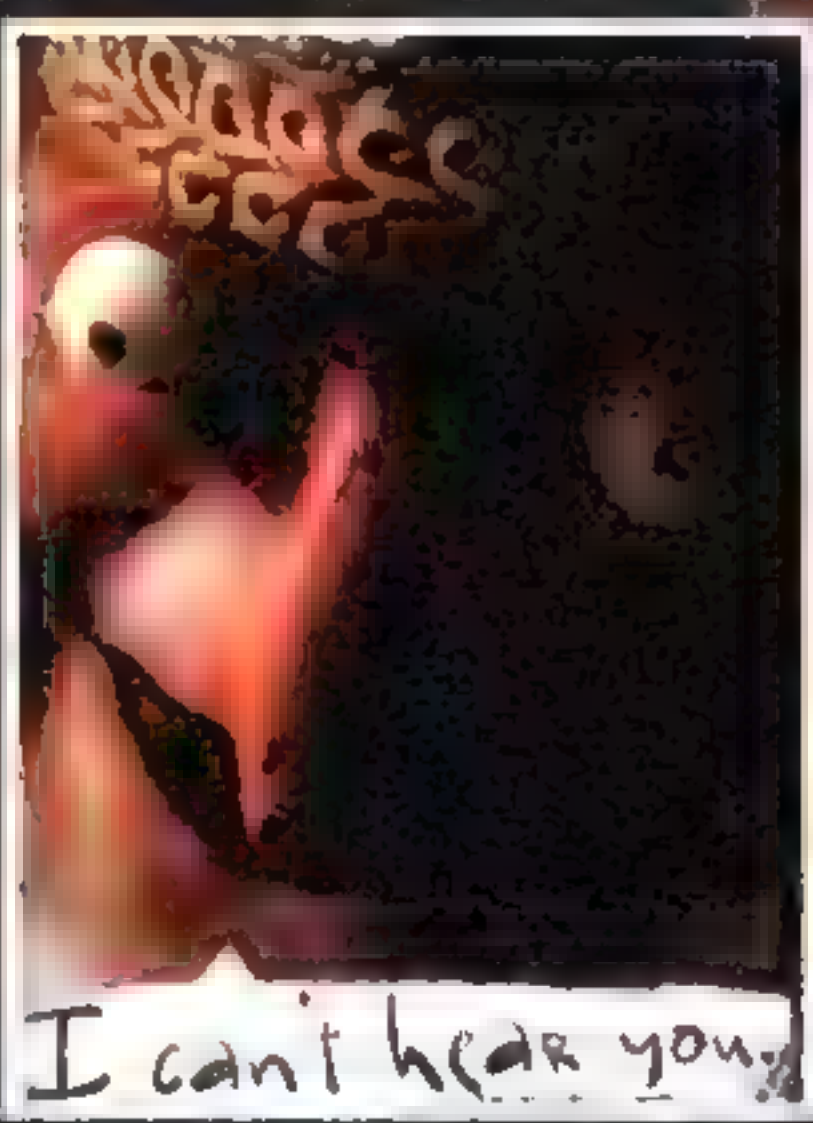
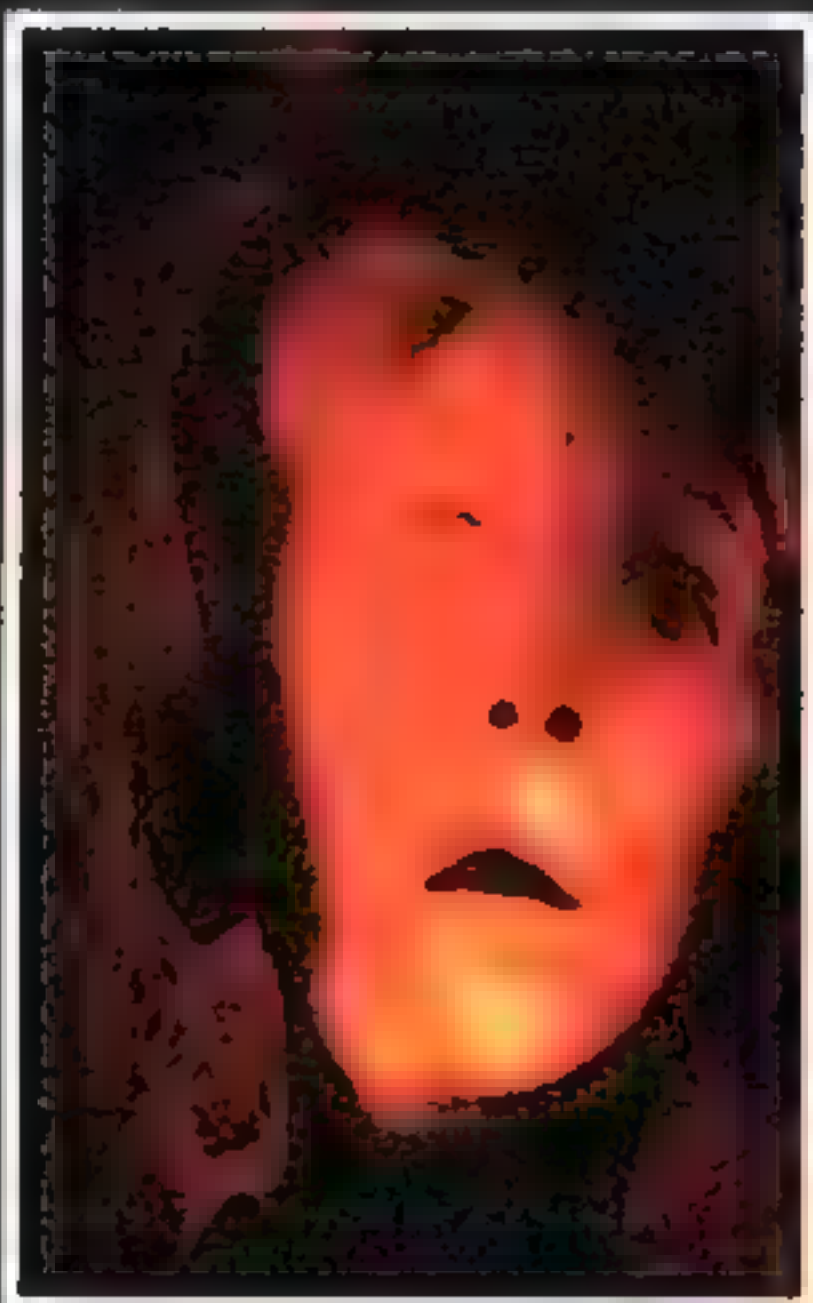
In the nine months since the Marvel Mart catalogs first appeared, Marvel has cut ties with one distributor (Comics Unlimited, who were eventually sold to Diamond—and who, coincidentally, kicked up one of the biggest stinks about the Marvel Mart catalog) and purchased another. They've acquired properties that give them the potential to tap into other markets in America and overseas. They've acquired the machinery that would allow

**ONE MIGHT SUGGEST
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MARVEL WAS SIMPLY
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MR. PUNCHED

On paper it sounded like a sure thing: Neil Gaiman (the award-winning writer who convinced a generation of women to purchase ankhs) reuniting with longtime friend Dave McKean (the man whose covers are works of art) for the graphic novel *Mr. Punch*. Even as a hardcover book, one suspected there was going to be a demand. Which made it all the more curious—and Gaiman all the more furious—when DC only printed 15,000 copies. Rumors abounded: Was the low print run really the result of a mysterious wager? Was it really a reaction to the commercial failure of *Batman: Digital Justice*? Was it simply a sign of excessive caution in a stagnant, unpredictable market? Whatever, the end result was a great book that got talked about for all the wrong reasons.



THE QUESTION: WAS MARVEL DOING ALL THESE THINGS BECAUSE THEY WANTED THE MONEY OR BECAUSE THEY *NEEDED* THE MONEY?



them to market and distribute those properties. If the Marvel Stores come into being, they have the potential to eliminate middlemen entirely.

Of course, the burning question became: Was Marvel doing this because they wanted the money or because they *needed* the money? After the purchase of Malibu, industry analysts had estimated Marvel's debt to be close to \$400 million. Is Marvel taking over the world, or, as one industry observer suggested, are they simply taking *on* the world?

At the moment, it's anybody's guess. What it will do to their cre-

ative direction will come down to the personal dictates of the consumer. What will it do to the business of comics? What *hasn't* it done? By year's end, rumors were flying fast and furious about distributors and exclusivity deals, and companies large and small were searching their ledgers and their hearts to determine their futures in the marketplace.

One of the reasons this industry is reeling right now is because of the recent "glut," which involved too many publishers publishing too many books, which too many retailers bought on the premise that just

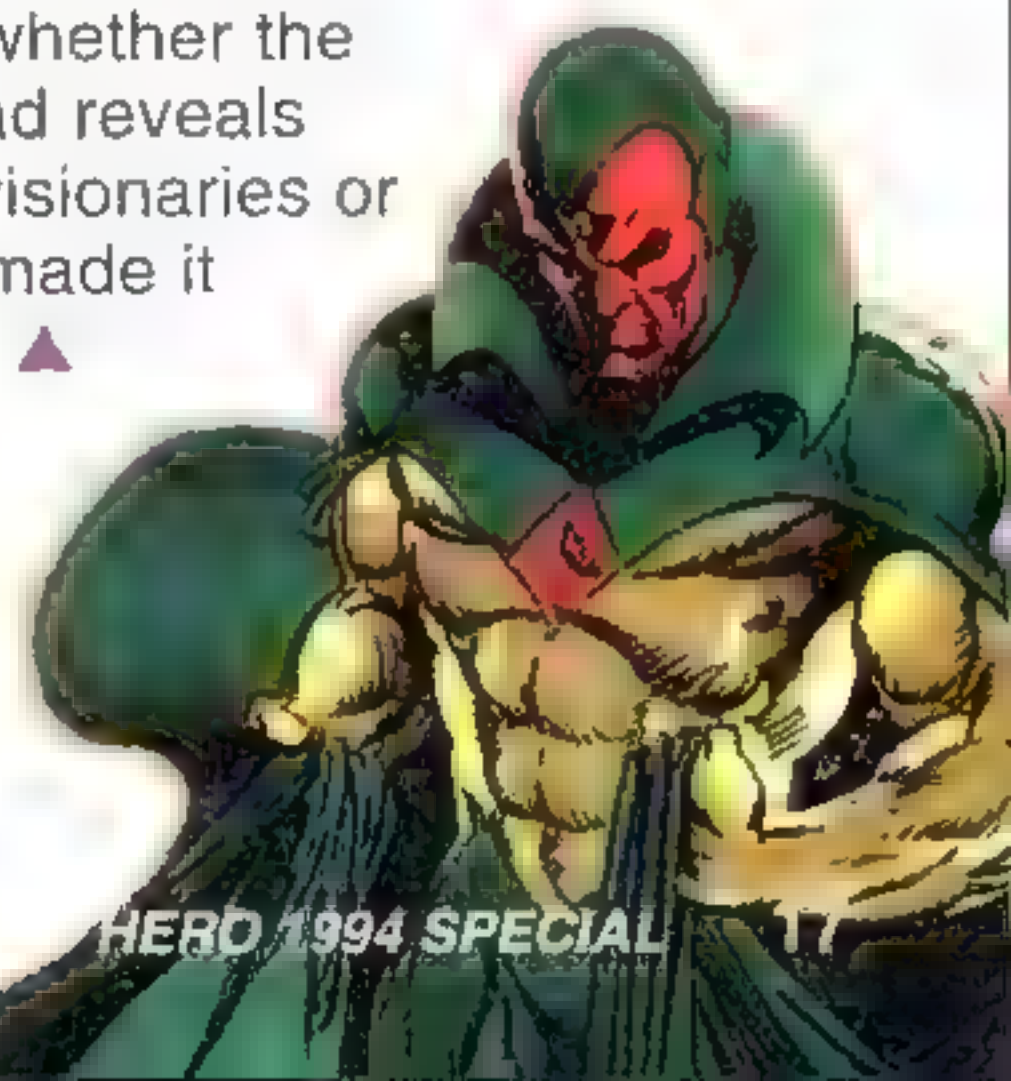
enough customers would do the same. It was a notion that couldn't last forever, and by the end of this year, it hadn't.

Over the next year, you're likely to see a lot of changes in the way comic books are retailed and sold. Some of those changes will simply be a case of this industry catching up to the late-20th-century business. Others will be born of panic and greed, and as such will serve the same purpose in the long run of a Band-Aid on a bullet wound.

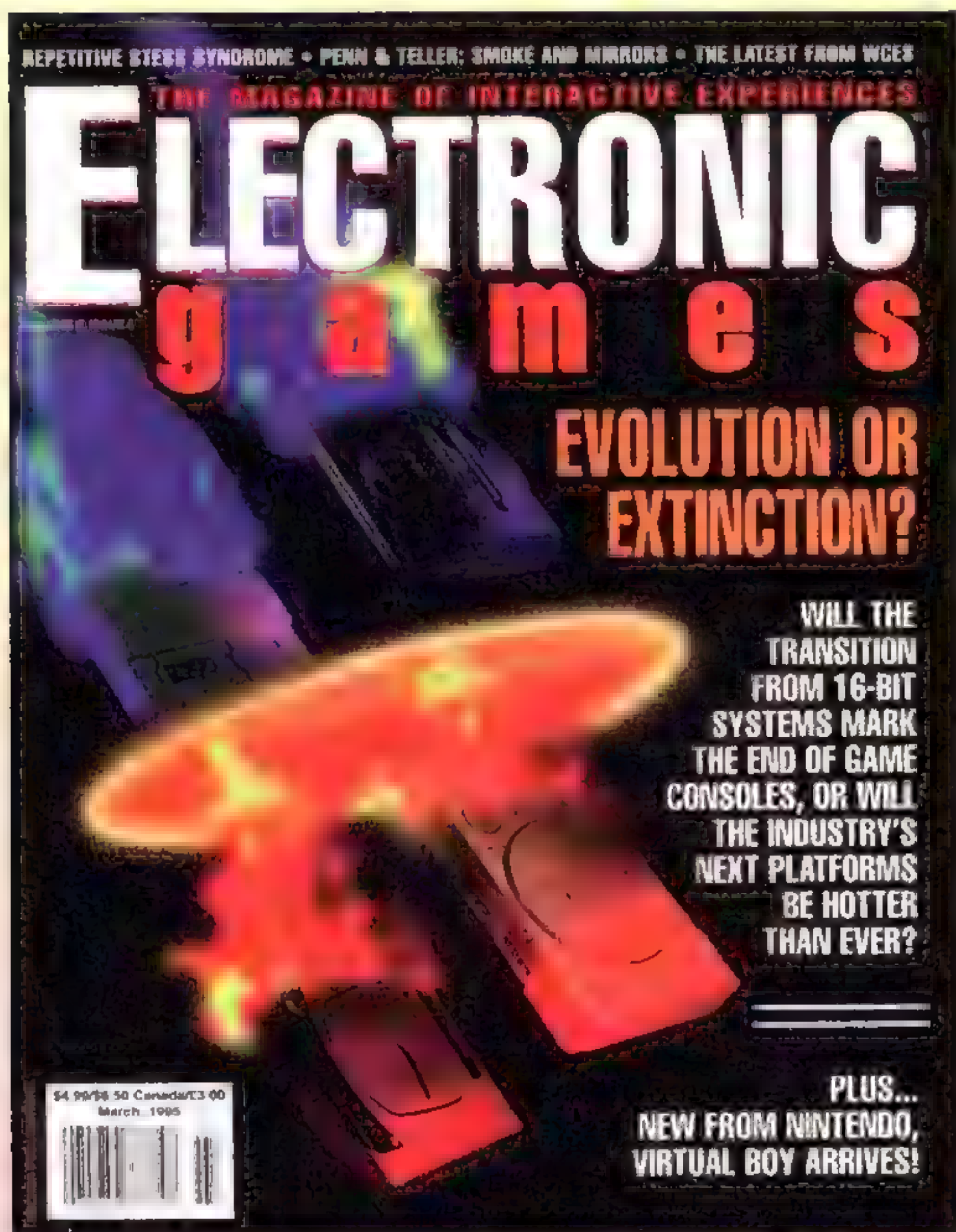
For what it's worth, this is the first time in many years that the direct market is actually visibly uncertain about its future. In a worst case scenario, that could mean a vicious battle for "survival of the fittest," in which those with vast resources try to crush the smaller ones out of existence. It's also possible that retailers and distributors will decide that they can handle a little bit of everything after all (especially those books that aren't tapping an already dried-up creative vein)—particularly if one of the Big Two actually does decide to go their own way. (Wasn't it Dylan who said, "When you've got nothing, you've got nothing to lose"?) For their part, Marvel—whether the year ahead reveals them as visionaries or villains—made it happen. ▲

CRUMB VS. SCUM

Cartoonist Robert Crumb was quite surprised this fall when he learned that two of his more ironic, satirical strips, "When the Niggers Take Over America," and "When the Goddamn Jews Take Over America" had been reprinted—without his permission—in *Race & Reality*, a periodical published by white supremacists, a group not traditionally recognized for their fine-tuned senses of irony or satire.



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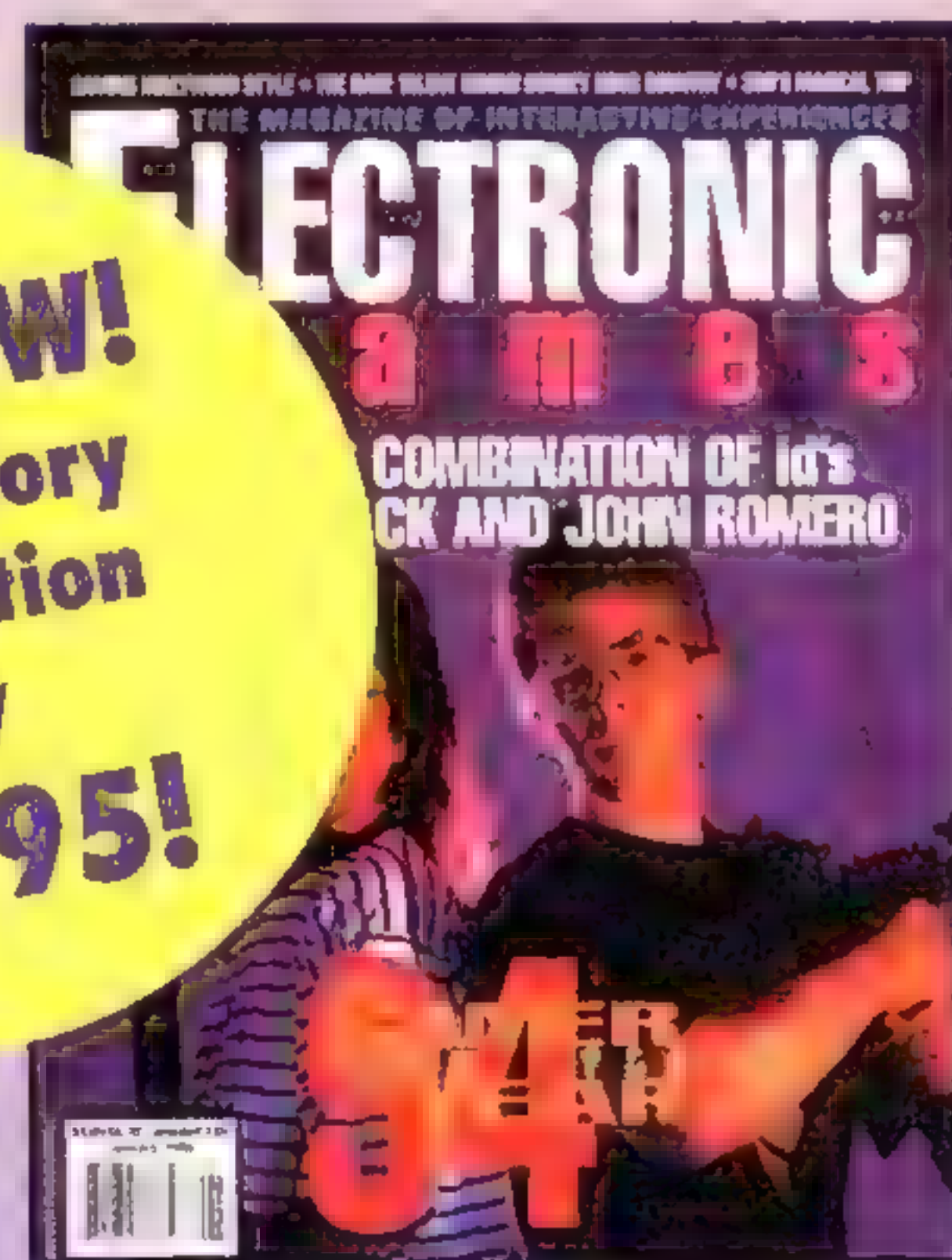
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TALKING TO THE MAJOR PLAYERS

THIS WAS A BIG YEAR FOR
a) COMIC BOOK ARTISTS
FOUND GUILTY OF OBSCENI-
TY, b) STILL MORE ARTISTS
PUSHING FOR CREATORS'
RIGHTS, c) COMPANIES
GOING UNDER, d) CREATORS
EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE
METHODS OF MAKING AND
SELLING THEIR BOOKS,
e) COMIC BOOK CHAR-
ACTERS MAKING BIG
SPLASHES IN FILM
AND ANIMATION AND
f) ALEX ROSS.

MICHAEL DIANA • FRANK
MILLER • ROB LIEFELD •
JIM VALENTINO • JIM
SHOOTER • SCOTT
MCCLLOUD • LARRY
MARDER • ALEX ROSS •
JIM CARREY • JOHN
KRICFALUSI • PAUL DINI •
BRUCE TIMM

How's the appeal coming along?

Well, right now where it stands [I'm] on violation of probation because I didn't pay the psychiatrist's bill and I didn't pay all my fines, so I have to go to court. That's set for March 6, 1995.

Your psychiatrist actually charged you an extra grand, is that right?

Yeah. That was for time reading over the *Boiled Angels*. She'd be gettin' more money for looking at them than I ever got for drawing them.

Having read them, what did the psychiatrist say to you?

Well, she didn't say anything biased in either way, she just looked through each page and asked me if I drew them. I don't think she did a very good job of looking over the things, because she told me she's looked over them for 10 hours and then she pointed out each page and said, "Did you draw this one? Did you draw this one? Which ones did you draw?" and I've got my name on the bottom of each one that I drew. I was thinking "Well, you didn't spend 10 hours looking over these."

Has anything positive come out of this notoriety?

Yeah, well, a lot more people know about it than had ever known about it. The state has brought a lot of attention on the whole thing that I never would've gotten if they'd left it alone. They had a big problem with the [idea] that children were going to get a hold of the material, and that was the reason ... I don't know any kids who got a hold of it. When they started the trial, they had to put the #7 and #ATE copies on public file. People who are

interested in the case have to be able to come in and look at the material. Ten-year-old kids are allowed to look at it too, so they're exposing it to people saying, "Look what he did," and a lot more people are seeing it.

Also, I met this girl who I'm engaged to now because of this whole thing. She got in trouble for being on a cable access show and showing a video of GG Allin defecating on stage. Around the same time, my case started coming up in the news, and I had the same lawyer she did, so we ended up meeting and got along really good. She gave me support.



Part of your probation stipulates that you aren't allowed to draw "obscene" art at all, even for your own amusement. Have they made it any more clear to you exactly what that means?

No, not at all. I think just about anything I drew might be seen as obscene; if I drew a basket of fruit with a banana in it, they'd say it was a phallic symbol.

Can you think of a specific example where you started to draw something and then decided, "Ehh, better not," and tore it up?

Yeah, but I don't stop drawing it. I just go somewhere else where I can think better, and not feel like I'm being held down.

If your art isn't obscene, what is it?

I think of it as being shocking or gross or disgusting. That's what it's supposed to be; it's supposed to be, like, ugly art. I'm just saying that art doesn't always have to be nice and pretty and pleasant all the time. It can be ugly too and still be art. ▲

[Portions of this interview appeared in HERO ILLUSTRATED #20.]

**"I'M JUST
SAYING THAT
ART DOESN'T
HAVE TO BE
NICE AND
PRETTY AND
PLEASANT
ALL THE
TIME."**

MIKE DIANA

BY STEVE DARNALL

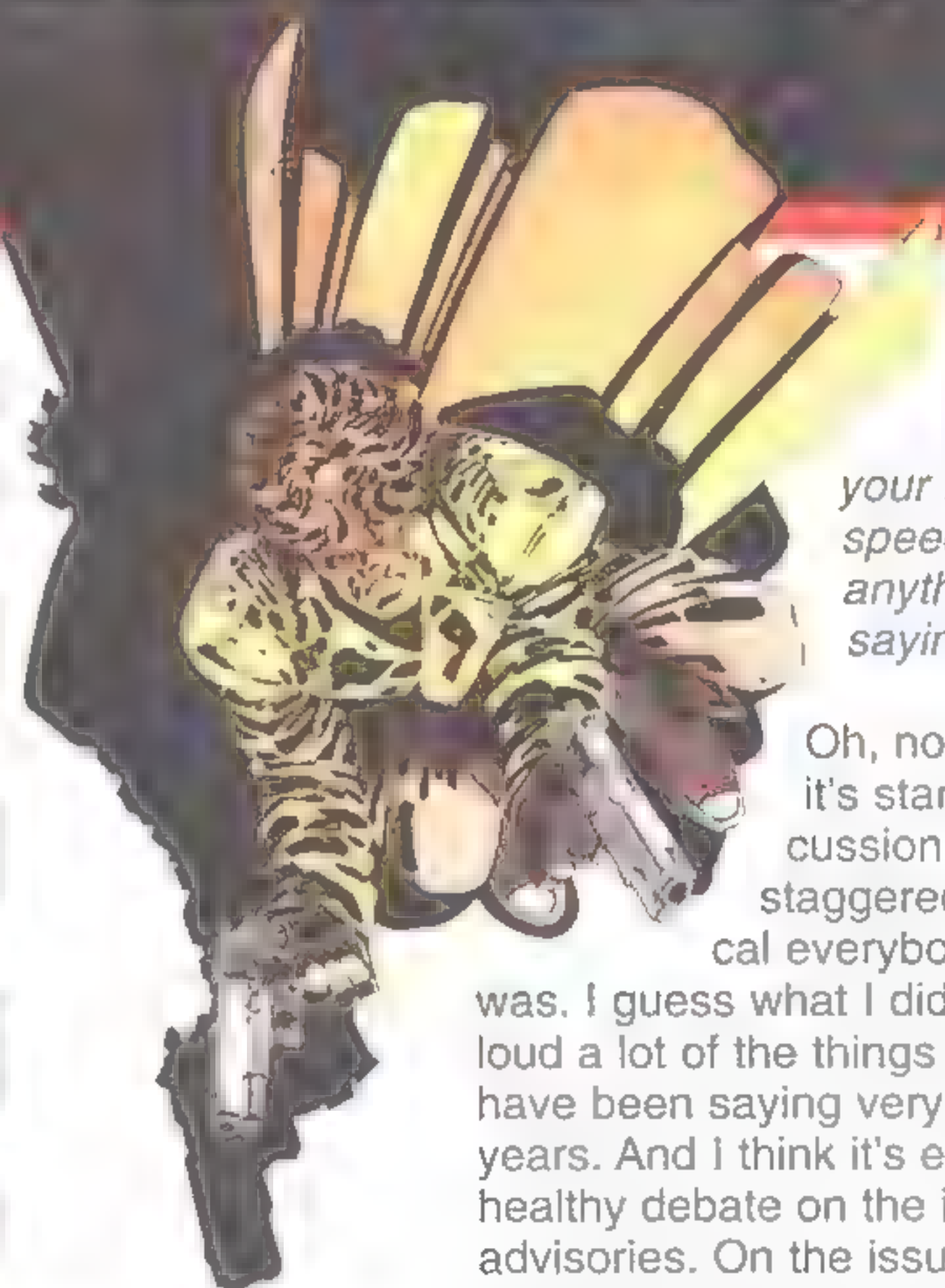


**"I'M STILL A LITTLE STAGGERED BY
HOW RADICAL EVERYBODY THOUGHT
MY DIAMOND SPEECH WAS."**



MILLER FRANK

BY JOE FIELDER



Regarding your Diamond speech: Is there anything you regret saying?

Oh, no. I'm glad that it's started some discussion. I'm still a little staggered by how radical everybody thought it was. I guess what I did was say out loud a lot of the things many people have been saying very quietly for years. And I think it's encouraged healthy debate on the issue of cover advisories. On the issue of cover advisories in particular, I hope that it at least helped people to take a slow slide we were headed toward, which I really hope can be reversed because I think we have disaster waiting for us and for no damn reason at all.

And the Comics Code Authority ...

The Comics Code Authority responded, breaking their 40-year silence. [Laughter]

Back in 1966, Burroughs' Naked Lunch went up against the Supreme Court and was found not to be obscene. That was the last time that book publishers really had to fight that. Why do you think comics are still being plagued with that sort of small mindedness?

Because the comic book field hasn't had the good sense to realize that we're part of the publishing industry. In the fever to latch onto the movie industry, we're picking up some of its bad habits. And I think it's very important that we realize publishing, while a smaller industry than film or TV, is a better one and one that's been willing to stand up for the First Amendment. It's not simply the convenience of artists at stake, it's the entire art form,

the future of it. My generation inherited that damn stupid Comics Code; I don't want to pass along on something worse to the next.

I'd like to think that people are starting to notice how much you can do with prose there, along with art. It just seems like an art form that's been just sneered at for so long.

And the worst thing is that it's been sneered at by the people who do it and love it the most. We've got to get past that. We've got to grow up a little bit, and realize that we don't have to be reading it under the covers anymore. That's really where a lot of our problems come from, we have historic self-contempt, but I'm hoping it's my generation that'll turn that around.

What's next for Sin City?

I have several other possible stories for the next series. It could be a shorter one or it could be a real long one depending on which one I do first. My plan is to do a *Sin City* book every year. It really is the bulk of my effort in comics now.

What are the other projects, besides Martha and Sin City?

Right now that's about it. There's the Geof Darrow project, *Big Guy & Rusty The Boy Robot*. That's in the wings right now and will probably be coming up come spring. But most of it ... it's pretty easy to answer that question these days because most of what I'm doing is *Sin City*, and when I'm not doing that I'm usually doing *Martha*.

I mean, for so long we were stuck in that genre, and much as I love superheroes ... what comics can do is amazing. ▲

[Portions of this interview originally appeared in HERO ILLUSTRATED #18.]

**"I THINK
MARVEL HAD**

**EVERY
INTENTION OF
MAKING AN
EXAMPLE OF
US IF WE'D
FAILED"**

ROB LIEFELD

BY JOE FIELDER

In Frank Miller's Diamond keynote speech he said that it was a huge risk for all of you, but that's hard for people to realize since Image actually took off. What would you say the level of risk was?

We risked everything! The thing that a lot of people don't take into account is that we were gambling with our careers and future income. Sure we'd all made a nice little nest egg off of our respective books, but by going out on our own we knew we'd be punished. We'd be made examples of.

I think we put our reputations on the line. We put our future incomes on the line and I can't stress that enough. We'd made that nice little nest egg, but that wasn't going to take care of us for the rest of our lives. There's also the issue of being able to work in this industry. The income was kind of a black list thing, and I think they were very intent on making an example of us if we'd failed. If there'd been no risk, it would have been formed 10 times over, 10 years before. It was the threat of being punished or being made an example that I think kept people from doing it for such a long time. And the only buffer that we had was that we were all enjoying a fair amount of fanfare at the time and the fans responded well to our work. I always based it on the fact that [for] Frank Miller at any time in his career after Daredevil, John Byrne post-*X-Men* or George Perez post-*Titans*—I'd of bought whatever they did whether it was Grandma's Comics or DC Comics.

There are four members of the Newmen that I created who I own and then a secondary character, and then there're two major heroes and two

major villains who I don't have anything to do with. They're given a lot of spotlight, they're given a lot of presence in the comic book—and I think that's cool. That's how I wish it would've been with Marvel so that I could've walked away with all my stuff. Had that been the arrangement then Image wouldn't have been necessary. Epic Comics always existed, but name to me the Epic comic that gets pushed as much as *Wolverine*! Marvel wasn't about to push the creator-owned stuff as much as they pushed the stuff they owned.

I mean, yeah, we've all been in bed with *Wolverine* and Captain America and Batman and had fun with them. But after a while you just go, "I'm so tied as to what I can do with this character." I mean, for the love of Pete! [With] Cable, they were sitting there telling me how I could do [him.] It reminded me of the story that Jim Valentino told me about Alan Moore after he got *Swamp Thing* up and running. I remember when *Swamp Thing* was getting hot.

People were picking it up and talking about it and going, "Man, this is really different from the *Swamp Thing* I read a couple years back." And suddenly that book became interesting, there was attention turned to it—and DC knocked Alan out of the driver's seat and said, "Thanks for drivin'. We'll take over now." And that's what happened at Marvel.

The thrust of my career now has been ... turning this industry around to the point where it's no mystery that *The X-Men* sucks. Because all the good creators left! It's like, "Hey! You want to know why this book is dry now? It's because its creative talent left." And if they haven't left yet, they'll leave in time. ▲

[This interview originally appeared in HERO SPECIAL #8.]



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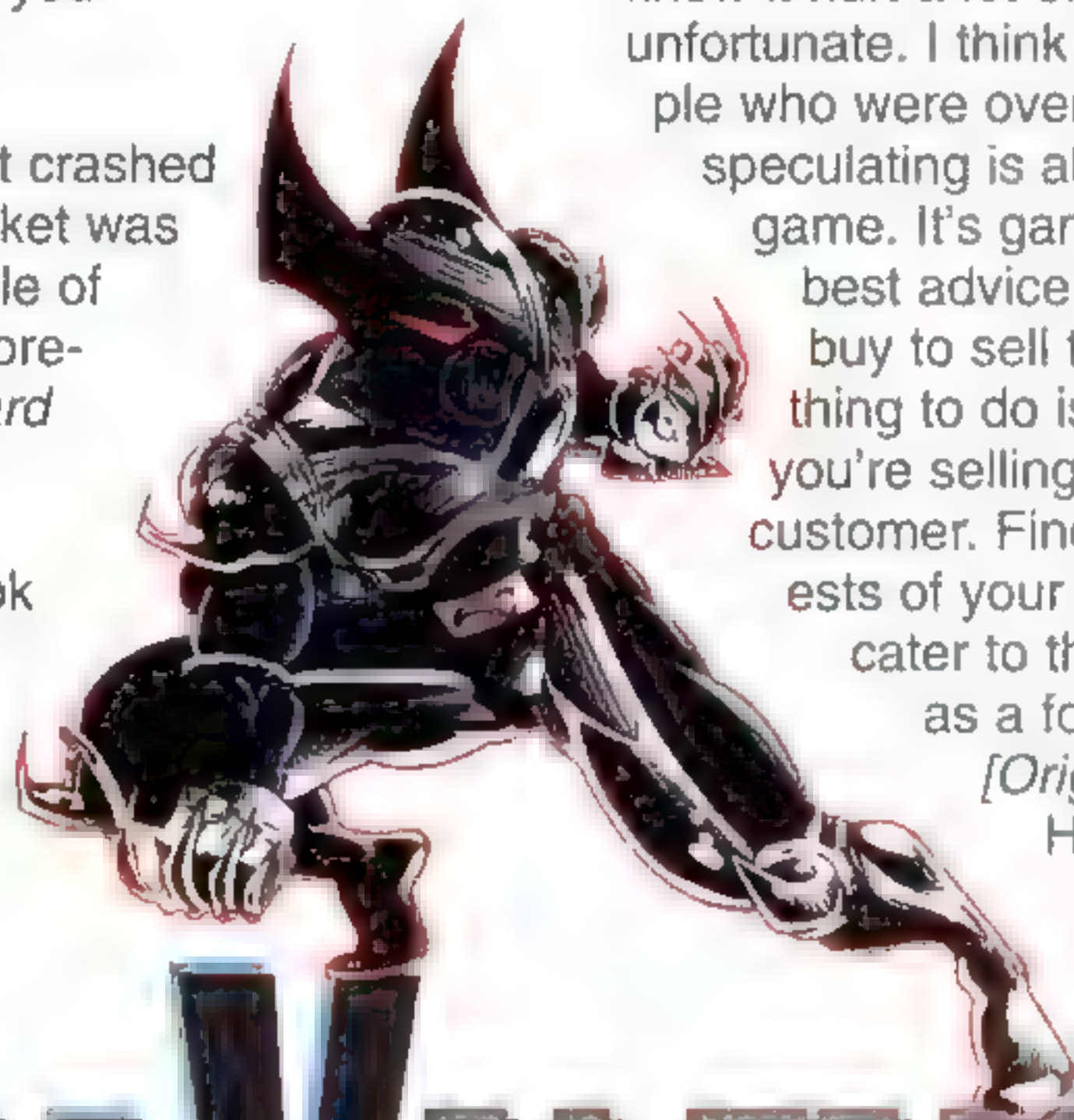


Image was formed under the idea of creators' retaining their creations, but they often do work-for-hire on their books. What's the difference between Marvel hiring a penciler or inker and Image doing the same?

Well, I think the deeper question is, 'How can you espouse creators' rights and still do work-for-hire?' For me, the way I see it is this: Creators' rights means basically, "He who creates, owns." Let's take The Pact for example. I created The Pact. I created the characters. I created the concept. I created it. OK? I own it. It's my toy. Now, I've allowed other people to play with my toy, for that I pay them fairly well. I let them share in the benefits of that—very much the same way Marvel or DC would. I try to treat them with respect and with dignity and if they create anything along the way, I sign a waiver saying that I have no claim whatsoever on that character, to that concept, it is theirs, they created it—they own it. And that's the only fair way to do it. Under this system, Jim Starlin would still own Thanos, Steve Gerber would still own Howard the Duck, I would still own Talon and Jack Kirby would either own or co-own the entire Marvel Universe. That's the way it should be done. That's the way it should've been done all along. So I think that's really the difference. You can do work-for-hire and do it honorably. The way to do that is to maintain that basic tenet of creators' rights—he who creates, owns.

Some people blame Image either partly or wholly for the market crash last year. How would you respond to that?

I think the market crashed because the market was fueled for a couple of years by, I think predominantly, *Wizard* Magazine, into a feeding frenzy whereby they took card mentality and brought it over to comics. Now I illustrate



that by asking anyone to go back and take a look at their back issues and the way they pushed and prodded Valiant. I don't have anything against Valiant and I don't have anything against *Wizard* or anybody there, but I think they did this and I think the record proves that they did it. They made a bunch of books with negligible value into "valuable hot commodities." And when the speculation died—*poom!* They hit the ground. I think Valiant more than anything proves that point. I think with Image there was some real genuine heat there. The fans were really behind the company, but I think Valiant brings it up to a level of, "Well, gee. It wasn't genuine at all." Why was this propped up the way this was? And again, I ask people to look at the record and look at it really, really carefully. I think this card mentality entered into the equation of the "Hot" properties that kids were going to make a fortune off of. It's already worth over 100 dollars now. If you buy *Harbinger* now, well, in three years, it's going to be worth three times that. "Get it now! This is hot! Here's another hot one!" Well, geesh, kids. It just doesn't work that way when you've got 1 million copies of something and you've only got 500,000 people who read these books. It ain't going to be "Hot." It ain't going to be worth money, and you aren't going to get a return on your investment.

But if we also look historically, about every five years this market starts to self-correct. It has highs then lows, then it self-corrects. We're at a self-correction stage right now. I think we're coming out of it, and I think it's healthy. I'm very glad that the market crashed. I know it hurt a lot of people, and that's unfortunate. I think it mostly hurt people who were over-speculating, and speculating is always a dangerous game. It's gambling. I think the best advice for any retailer is to buy to sell through. The best thing to do is to know who you're selling to and sell to your customer. Find out what the interests of your customers are and cater to that. And I say that as a former retailer. ▲

[Originally appeared in HERO SPECIAL #8.]

JIM VALENTINO

BY JOE FIELDER

JIM SHOOTER

BY STEVE SPAULDING

What did finishing up with Defiant entail?

Like a lot of start-up companies, we came to the point where we needed a second financing, we needed a partner, and we had very promising negotiations with one major media partner, and then another major media partner. It just didn't happen. The other partners couldn't agree. So Defiant ran out of money, and ... what I managed to do at least was make sure that all of the individuals were paid. Every employee and every freelancer got every penny they were owed, except me [laughs] but that's all right.

What brought you to Broadway Video in the first place?

Actually, they were one of the people interested, way back when, in being my partner for Defiant. When the other deals I was working on didn't work out, I actually went back to Broadway Video, and they remained extremely interested in comics, but they were much more interested in starting one of their own at that point. Broadway is now interested in seriously attacking the comic book market, really starting a division and really becoming a serious publisher. That's fine. At this stage in my life I've made it clear that I'm not going to go anywhere and just be a nine-to-five guy. I would like to have some stake in the success of what we create, and so would everyone else here, the whole group. Broadway Video is essentially owned by Lorne Michaels, and ... they have a great deal of respect for creative people. When I said, "Can we work something out that's worth our while," their attitude was, "But of course." So it looks like, even though I'm not in the same position—

Owner/Publisher.

Right, I was in control. This may actually work out better for me in the long

run, because this is a creative-oriented company, and the value they put on creative work is amazing. So it wasn't exactly an uphill fight to make this a very good situation for all of us.

Well, besides a lot of respect and good feeling from your new partners, what kind of resources does Broadway Video have to offer to a burgeoning comic book line?

Well, Broadway Video is the largest independent film producer on the East Coast. Lorne Michaels is partners with NBC on *Saturday Night Live*, a 20-year-old franchise. They have an incredible video production facility here in New York, they're one of the largest television producers, they do a lot of merchandise and licensing.

They own a lot of properties: Lassie, the Lone Ranger and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. They understand intellectual properties, they understand exploitation in the best sense of the word. As they pointed out to me, with *Saturday Night Live* they've been very careful, they haven't gone out and written every license they could write. They've tried to pick and choose and really ... cultivate it, build a franchise and that's the right thing to say; that made a lot of sense.

So now you have resources and the opportunities to go into other media.

Yeah, and the potential benefit to ourselves and our creative people. In some form, you hope for that relationship so that your creations can get out there in other ways. Well, I kind of backed into it. Defiant didn't succeed, but it succeeded creatively well enough to impress these people and make them believe that this is the team to work with. So, as I say, I kind of backed into it, but here we are, in the place where I've been trying to get for the past 30 years.

[Portions of this interview originally appeared in HERO ILLUSTRATED #20.]

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You've actually been on the road this year more than Bob Dylan, and in an unusual turn for a comic book creator, you've actually spent most of that time giving your Understanding Comics lecture in a non-comics environment, that is to say in straight book stores and whatnot.

What we sometimes call "the real world." I think about a third of my traveling was at least comics related—conventions, trade shows, comic stores—but the rest was new for me, and I think new for a lot of people in comics.

And you got a completely different audience as a result.

Yes I did, but to my relief I found that they were a very attentive audience. I was fearing that I might encounter a lot of blank stares, but in fact, I found that those outside of the comics world who had an interest in comics came to comics with a very healthy curiosity and were very eager to learn more. That was very refreshing.

So what can we do to get to them even further? How can the industry perform a successful follow-up?

Well, a lot of these people were book buyers, and they were accustomed to spending considerable amounts of money on books. I think it's very, very important that when we're trying to reach out to that greater population, that we give them things through which they can get a whole story all at once. A 200-page graphic novel is much more gratifying to the professional adult casual comics buyer than being told they can hunt down 10 two-dollar issues of a comic book.

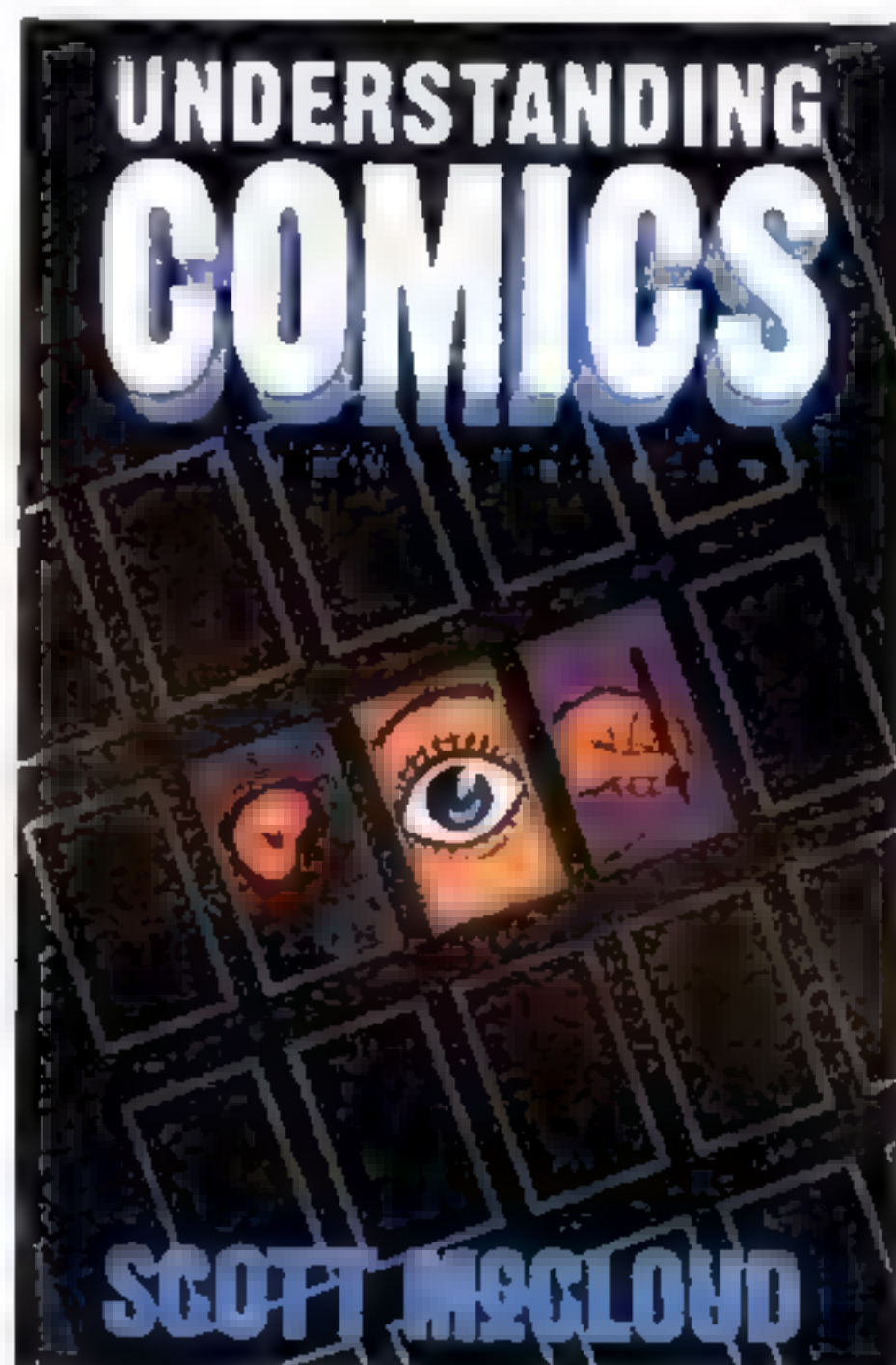
You're also working on the CD-ROM version of Understanding Comics.

With all the rumors of companies going exclusive with certain distributors, one wonders—for someone who doesn't have an interest in writing Flash or X-Force—if CD-ROM might not be one of the only ways for a creator to get his/her comics out there.

It's true that the independent comics have suffered horribly from what I like to think of as the tyranny of things. We produce these works of art, and these works of art have to exist as objects, as things to be carted by trucks from one location to another, and that system doesn't always work to our advantage. It's very slow and inefficient, and it's very deeply frustrating that often an

artist will produce a work of great power and integrity, and there will be an audience for it and an audience that is eager to get it, and the business system that is completely incapable of getting it from that willing seller to that willing buyer. That's a total breakdown of the system, and systems like that have to be reinvented or replaced, and frankly, I'm looking at the possibility of both. I'm deeply discouraged at the way

the comics industry has completely failed in the long run in its mission to have comics grow, in the last few years. Certainly, in the last 10 years there was progress, but now it's terrible stagnant, and yes, I'm looking at CD-ROM. As the technology improves, and as some form of commerce is set up, we could see some very exciting things go down. The bottom line for me is that in my studies I have concluded that comics predate print, so it doesn't disturb me to think that they might postdate it as well. ▲

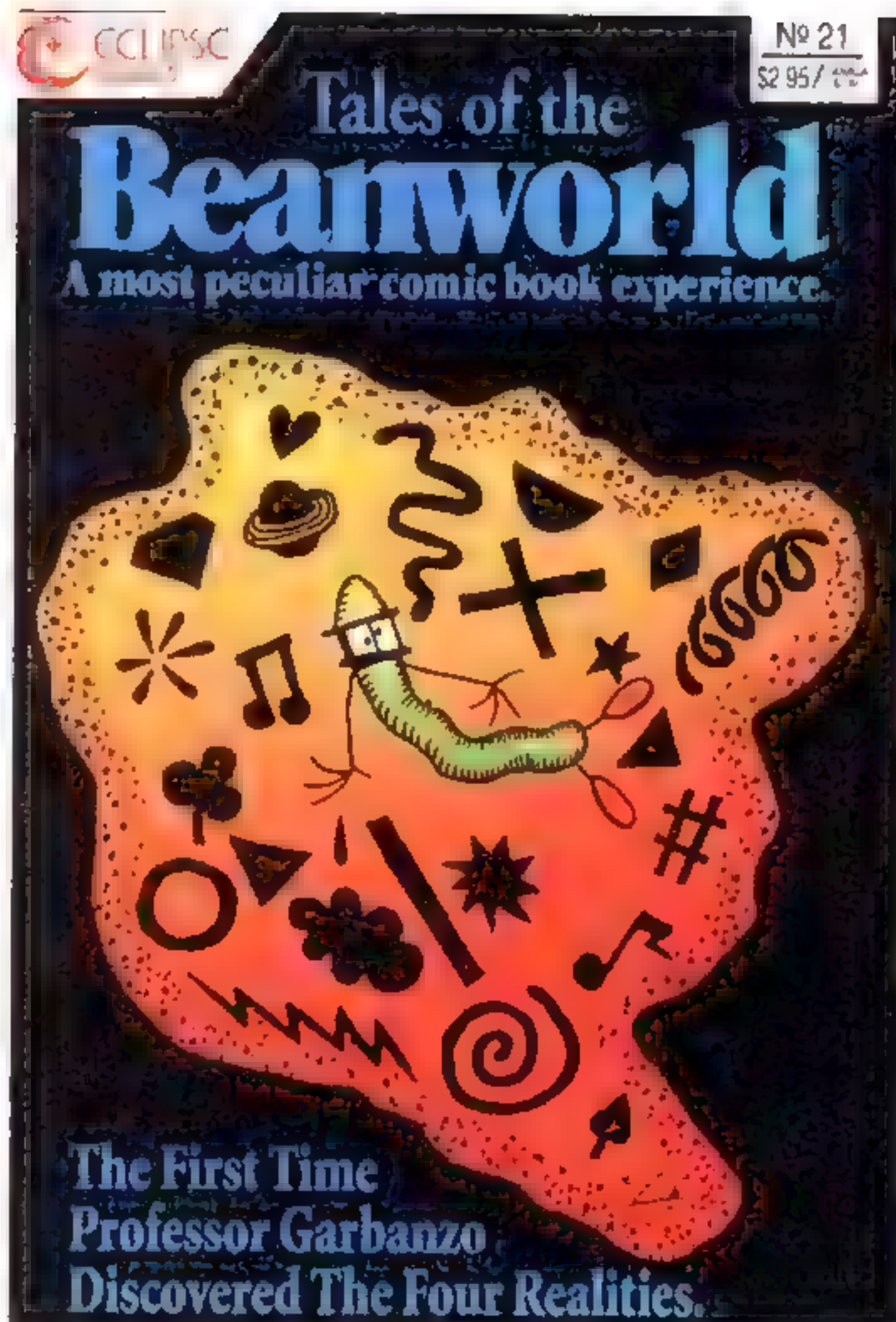


SCOTT MCCLOUD

BY STEVE DARNALL

LARRY WARDER

BY THE EDITORS OF HERO



How did you get to be Image's "Executive Director"?

The Image office started after they left Malibu. They left, I think, much more quickly than they intended to. It was clear when they set up the Image office, it was done very quickly. They were not necessarily businessmen who knew how to run a comic office or who, more importantly, knew that this was a comic book office that was going to run unlike any comic book office that ever really previously existed. They had to put together a functioning office very quickly that would deal with trade terms, with printers; a lot of things that they weren't necessarily sure how worked in all the infinite details. The distributors were very, very helpful to them in making

some of these decisions. And then other occasions running into a rocky road would very quickly turn adversarial. I think it was very frustrating for the business community to deal with a company that was consistently turning in top-selling comics as far as orders went, and then dealing with people who didn't know how to actually get these comics out. You had decisions made, as I like to tell them, without fully understanding the ramifications. It wasn't just cause and effect; there were ripple effects from the ripple effects. And by the time it occurred to them that they really had to seriously consider the ramifications of every move they made, they'd already made moves that were causing late comics—plus, simultaneously, the comic book market collapsed.

These kids absolutely, positively, have intelligence. They have the ability to learn and eagerness to do the jobs they need to do. What they didn't have was someone to go to to bounce things off of, who would say, "That's a right decision. That's a wrong decision."

Obviously I could have walked into the Image office and they could've treated me like a substitute teacher. But when I walked into that office from day one they were like "Some one is here to help us ... to show us how some of these things work and to get them to work as a unit, and that there really is an Image Universe and to help coordinate it." And I have done all of those things. Have we bumped heads? Sure, we've bumped heads plenty of times. There's a lot of head-bumping amongst themselves, and with me. But that's what I guess they hired me for. ▲

[This interview originally appeared in HERO ILLUSTRATED #11.]



"THE GUYS AT IMAGE WERE NOT NECESSARILY BUSINESSMEN WHO KNEW HOW TO RUN A COMIC BOOK OFFICE."

"IT'S SO
NICE: AFTER
FIVE YEARS,
YOU'RE STILL
CONSIDERED
A
NEWCOMER."

ALEX ROSS

BY JOE FIELDER

What does it feel like to be an "overnight success" after five years in the business?

(Laughter) It's so nice, after five years you're still considered a newcomer. No, what can I say? It's been a f—king great year. Whatever happened to me in the last year is better than anything that I really could've hoped for. This is as good as I imagine it gets.

Now you're working on Kingdom Come for DC.

It's kind of an apocalyptic end of the world story line—but it's not the end of the world, it's the end of the superheroes' world. It's based on a lot of things that I wanted to tell ... versions of DC characters that I wanted to do, my own personal takes on characters and boy, are they giving me such complete rein on this. It's unbelievable. They even allowed me to do the Superman I wanted to, which changed the insignia. [That's] a pretty monumental thing to ask of DC.

It's like 20 or so years down the line. You'll see which characters don't age at all, and it allows for plenty of new characters to crop up [and] take old mantles over or the sons or daughters of older characters. I don't want to get too into that because ultimately the series comes down to the actual story; those are merely footnotes. If you see any of these characters I spent this time thinking of, they're, like, in the background of a panel. It's going to take a commentary after the series is out for me to point out what I was doing. The largest point we bring up in *Kingdom Come* is overcrowding. This also works as a wonderful metaphor for the entire state of the industry. Too many superheroes is just ... there's just no need for it, and some things got to give. Ultimately, it's like a big apocalyptic kind of Ragnarok for the superheroes. It's the end of their era.

You've wanted to work for Marvel, you've wanted to work for DC. Where

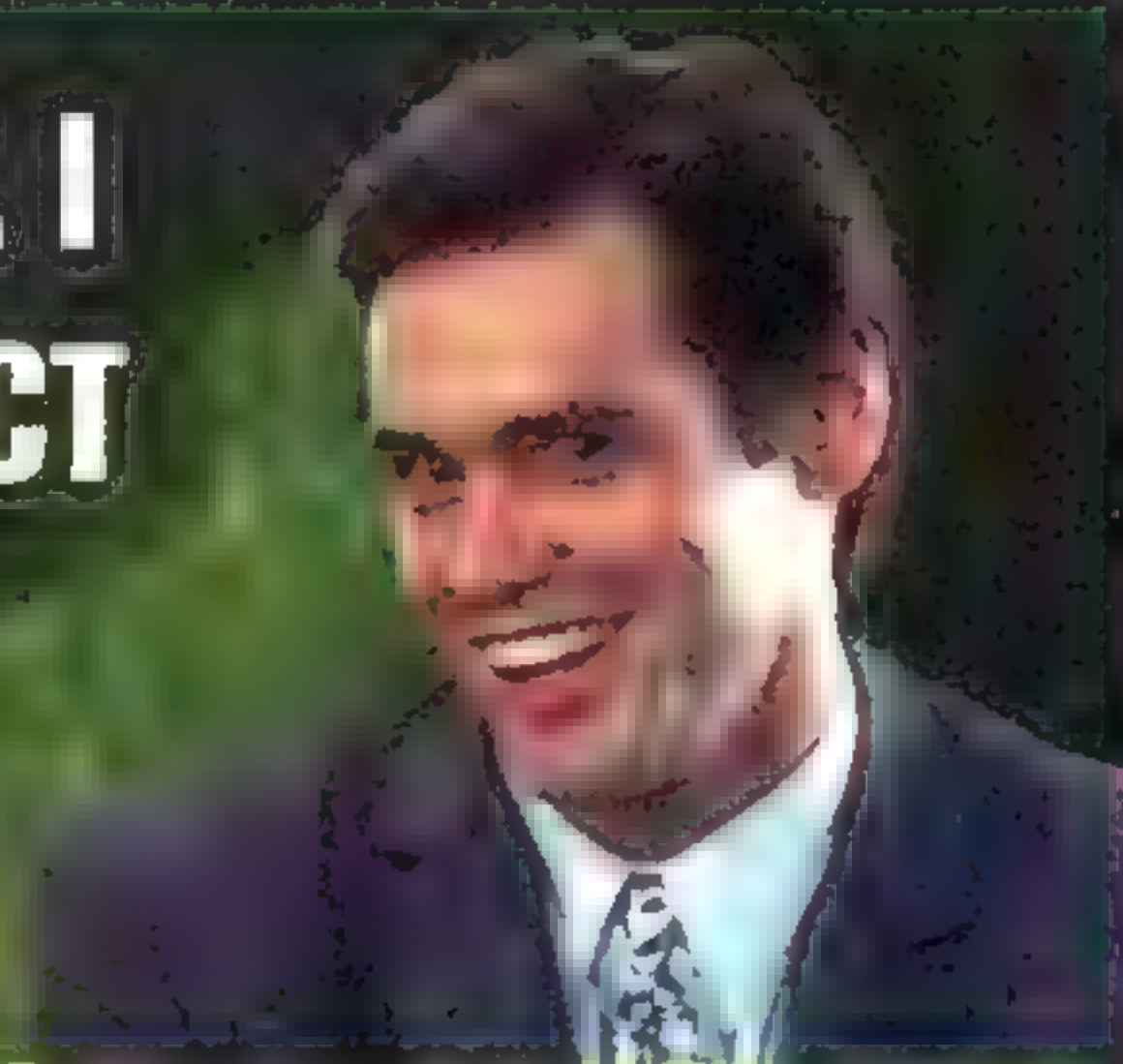


do you want to go from there?

That's another year and many months off. I may have another thing for DC. Essentially, I think I'll be kind of on the outskirts of the superhero genre. It's not like I never want to work in superheroes again but I honestly have to justify—not to everybody else but to myself—what have I got to say that's truly original? I honestly feel I had something to say with *Marvels*, I have something to say with this DC series, but am I going to continually be able to put out epics? No. It's too hard. I would like artistically to move on at some point within the next 10 years to doing things that are the next level, the things that bridge the gap between this one insular, tiny, little genre and things that are going to appeal to a much broader base of consumers. I'd like to produce something that my dad feels comfortable reading. I'd like to produce something that any girl on the face of the f—king earth feels comfortable looking at and reading ▲



"THE DOOR IS OPEN COMMERCIALLY. I CAN GET A MOVIE MADE. THE RESPECT OF YOUR PEERS; THAT'S THE NEXT STEP."



JIM CARREY

BY MIGHTY JOE FUNK

How much did you deviate from the script on The Mask?

[Laughter] I did that several times. [T]here's a park scene where I'm [The Mask] with Cameron [Diaz], and we were going to do this smoking effect where I smoke a ton of cigarettes. They had a machine all rigged up—it was going to smoke the cigarettes—and the machine broke down. [Chuck Russell] came to me before the take and said, "We don't have the effect so we're just going to do the scene without that," and I ... went off and thought about it, and came up with blowing the heart-shaped smoke ring and then blowing the arrow out of my nose, [that] goes through it. [We were] constantly thinking on our feet, because when there's special effects involved, you never know if you're going to be able to do what you've conceived.

You seem to be finding a lot of success of late with comic book characters. Were you a comics fan?

[I wasn't] really a big comic book guy ... I was a class clown. I was also a heavy thinker, I spent a lot of my time thinking. I mean, when I was 10, I used to sit and try to figure out the

universe. I kind of got all that serious shit out of the way first. I literally used to write books of poetry when I was 10, 11 years old.

Next up, you're playing the Riddler in Batman Returns.

There are stages with this character, because he starts out [as] kind of an impish, strange, desperate character who has this idea that he wants Bruce Wayne to fund. He slowly becomes this maniac, so it's like there's basically three stages to the character. I don't want to reveal what they are. I have definitely come up with a few things that are scaring a few people—some of the people around me just ask me not to do it.

Is this Hollywood's way of saying you've arrived?

I know what it means to me. It means if I do a good job with it ... it's kind of like a door opening, because, I mean, the door is open commercially ... I can get a movie made. But ... the respect of your peers, that's the next step, being able to hopefully someday call up Dustin Hoffman and say, "I'd love to do a movie with you," and him taking me seriously. Now, working with people like Tommy Lee Jones and Michael Keaton is a great, great thing for me. It's a dream come true.

Do you think there's any danger that you're going to get typecast as playing comic book characters, or is it even an issue for you?

I'm not worried about it. I believe that people who know me know that's not all there is to me. If all of a sudden all I'm getting is comic book scripts, I'll just go away for a while, until I get something that shows a different side. ▲

[This interview originally appeared in HERO ILLUSTRATED #15.]



Does the criteria for a good cartoon also make for a good comic book? How is it the same? How is it different?

It's a little early even to articulate. First of all, it doesn't have sound. We relied a lot on sound. We relied a lot on time. A cartoon is happening in real time. There's nothing you can do about it when a cartoon is happening. You just have to witness it. In a comic book, you can look back. You can spend a lot of time on a page. You can go from one panel to another. In one way there are a lot of handicaps, considering all the tools available to an artist in animation. Another advantage to comic books is you can do more detailed drawings. I know there are more advantages, but it's still just a little too early to say.

Do you still watch Ren & Stimpy? Have you seen any of the new episodes?

I've seen a few of them.

What do you think of them?

Just about what everyone else thinks.

That they've lost their soul?

Actually I'm surprised at the direction of *Ren & Stimpy*, because the one thing I thought they were going to do was tone it down. And they didn't tone it down. They took everything that Nickelodeon hated about our shows and they magnified it to the point of hideousness.

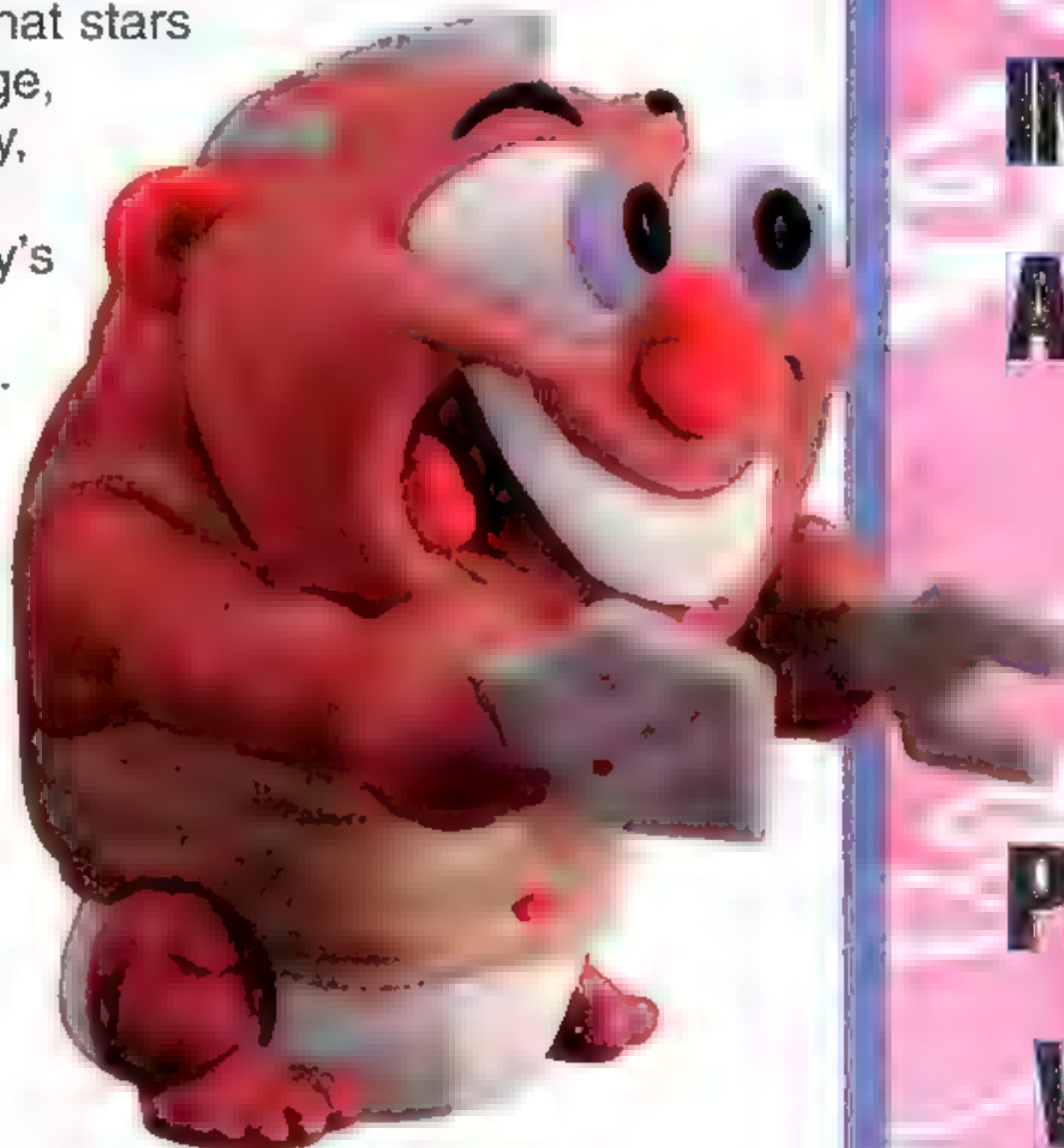
I'll tell you what the biggest problem is. There's no context for the actions. It's a series of gross jokes without a story context, or a relationship context, and you get bored with them. For all the railing I do about how story isn't as important as art, I'm being disproven by watching the new *Ren & Stimpy*. I look at those and go, "These need story." As simple as our stories were, and as simple as good cartoon stories are, they're still stories. You have to have some kind of story in order to care about the characters. Now it's ... repulsive to look at, and there's no personality. Nobody has any personality. They keep using all our cameo characters, only they don't have

the same personalities anymore. They're all psychotic maniacs.

What are the general plans for Spumco?

Oh, we have everything in development but nothing sold at this point. We're actually producing a Jimmy short right now called *Jimmy's Impossible Accidents*. Jimmy buggers himself up really hard. We want to sell that in movie theaters as a cartoon before the movie. We teamed George Liquor and Jimmy and discovered whole new story possibilities. We're developing a prime-time series called *The God Damn George Liquor Show*.

And that stars George, Jimmy, [and] Jimmy's girl-friend.



How far along are you with that? Is it fully developed?

Oh, it's developed. In fact, this comic book is a great breeding ground for these stories. We've written 10 times as many stories as we need for the comics.

Are we going to see The Ripping Friends anytime soon?

Oh, I doubt it. The Ripping Friends are just too manly even for us. ▲

[This interview originally appeared in HERO ILLUSTRATED #15.]

**"FOR ALL
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JOHN KRICFALUSI

BY JOE FUNK

"A FEW YOUNG COMIC READERS SAW
MAD LOVE IN A BAG GOING FOR \$10 AND
SAID, 'NOBODY TOLD ME THIS WOULD
BE WORTH ANYTHING!'"

"THE RATIONALE, FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, WAS 'WELL,
WE DON'T NEED TO MAKE ANY MORE
EPISODES.' I'LL ALWAYS HAVE A PROBLEM
WITH THAT."

Apparently, Warner Bros.' decision to end *Batman: The Animated Series* surprised you more than anybody. This wasn't a case of "Paul and Bruce have had enough; let's move on."

TIMM: The rationale, for what it's worth, was "Well, we don't need to make any more episodes. We've got enough to where we can run it in syndication until the end of time." That's the typical corporate answer. I'll always have a problem with that; I figure the more episodes you have, the better it is. We hear that every day, people calling in and saying, "Oh, why aren't you making more *Batman*? There's only five left that we haven't seen." It was the same thing with [*Star Trek: The Next Generation*]. They had something like 200 episodes, but they didn't need to make anymore to make money.

We're of two minds about it, really. It's kind of good that we stopped when we did, because there's nothing worse than seeing a show continue way past its prime. I don't think anybody watched the last five years of *M*A*S*H*, to use a really gross example. I think we could've done another 15 or 20 shows without losing steam.

It's got to be unsettling to realize that even if a project clicks, you can still be on the bubble.

DINI: Yeah, that's just a reality of the business. We came up with a show that was a lot of fun to do and was very well-received, and the reality of syndication is that you're on a limited lifespan for how long you can actually do that show. In rare cases, the studio will get behind you and say, "No, we really must have more of these," or "I'm really behind these characters," but the attitude around here is "Been here, done that."

TIMM: Well, there's the financial aspect of it, too. The show's a fairly expensive show to produce, and unlike most shows that are done for a network, we don't get any licensing fees for the show. The entire cost for the series is paid by Warner Bros. FOX doesn't pay us any money. They have a bartering agreement with FOX. That's another factor in why the show isn't being made.

Although, to be slightly positive, all is not lost with the future of the *Batman* cartoon. And in the meantime, hopefully we'll be working on cartoons that'll be just as fun as *Batman*, in their own way.

Your next project is Freakazoids for Steven Spielberg. What can you tell us about that?

TIMM: We can't really tell you much about it yet, because, believe it or not, it's still in the formative stage. We've been developing this thing for about six months or so, and it keeps changing. The basic premise is still about the same, but the whole thrust of the show—God, the whole *genre* of the show—is changing even as we speak. Basically, it's a wacky, teenage superhero show. Beyond that, we can't really say much more about it because—

DINI: We don't know.

TIMM: We don't know [laughs]. We're still working on it.

Do you guys see yourselves with a

regular comic book, or does that have any appeal to you at all?

DINI: I keep thinking about it. It would be fun to do, I just don't know if it's possible with my schedule. It's either one or the other: Do I want a full-time job writing comic books or do I want a full-time job in animation? We have talked about working on projects on our own, and I think that's the area we'd like to go into. Create a character of our own and send it out there and see how it does.

Mad Love won an Eisner, yet I hear it's one of DC's poorest-sellers. What does that tell us about the market?

TIMM: I don't really know. I think it's a darn good book. *Batman Adventures* is one of the few comics I look forward to reading every month. I don't know if it's marketing or what. We all know the comics industry has been kind of screwy the last couple of years, with the whole collector mentality going crazy and wrecking stores left and right. That probably has something to do with it. There's probably something about the *Batman Adventures* book that just doesn't look collectible, you know? It's not a violent book where major changes happen, they don't have characters dying or being dis-

membered, no new costumes. It's a pretty solid, reliable book.

DINI: A lot of pros read it. It's being read by a lot of pros who want to read a classic version of *Batman*. It's always being praised by them in every article I read about it, but most kids are buying 12 copies of *GEN¹³*, putting them in bags and hoping this'll be worth money next week. It was a surprise to a few young comic readers I talked to last year, when they saw *Mad Love* in a bag going for \$10 in a store, and they said, "Nobody told me this would be worth anything."

I understand you were this close to doing to Superman what you've been doing to Batman.

TIMM: And still may. Let's put it this way: I would love to do it, and I know Paul's excited about doing *Superman*

too. It would be a kick to do. I've actually done a whole bunch of character designs already. There's a lot of interest in it, but at the moment it's stalled, because of the possibility of a new [live-action] feature. Until they decide what to do, we can't do anything.

DINI: A lot of what we do in animation with the DC characters is predicated solely on what's happening to them as a movie property. If someone wants there to be a *Superman* movie, then there'll be a *Superman* animated series. For a while they talked about Lobo, because Lobo was going to be first a live-action movie, then they said, "Well, it'd be cheaper to do this in animation," so for a week, everybody was scrambling around doing Lobo designs. And that fell through.

TIMM: That was fun for a week! Thinking, "Oh, boy! What would we do with Lobo as a cartoon? Hmmm..."

I'm picturing the Taco Bell glass giveaway.

TIMM: [laughs] Exactly. Special entrails on the side.

DINI: "Drink this, fanboy!" ▲



PAUL DINI AND BRUCE TIMM

BY STEVE DARNALL

HOLLYWOOD HEROES

ANDY MANGELS'

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON FILM, VIDEO AND TV

This special edition of *Andy Mangels' Hollywood Heroes* takes a trip through the jungles and crypts of 1994, poking under the capes and into the teleports of the year. For the second year in a row, the big screen was surprisingly devoid of comic book heroes—although the small screen made up for the loss—but there were certainly genre films aplenty.

1994 IN REVIEW JANUARY

The year was supposed to start well on the big screen. Roger Corman's low-budget *Fantastic Four* film was set to open theatrically on Jan. 19, with a world premiere at the Mall of America near Minneapolis. Suddenly, with just weeks to go before the premiere, and almost a year to the day after the production started, the *Fantastic Four* film was killed by Neue-Constantin, who owned the film rights. Neue-Constantin wanted to hold out for a big-budget feature film for 20th Century Fox, helmed by

Chris Columbus. The first *FF* film was confiscated and shelved, but not before several bootlegs got out into Hollywood and the comic convention circuit.

Touchstone released the Chris Elliott-starrer *Cabin Boy* (Jan. 7), but the fanciful film sank to the depths of the sea. Only a hilarious guest turn by David Letterman and a half-man-half-shark salvaged the experience for those who ventured to see it. On the other hand, Abel Ferrara's remake of *Body Snatchers* (Warner, Jan. 15) was chilling, showing how difficult it would be to tell pod people from regimented soldiers on a military base.

On ABC, the acerbic animated series, *The Critic*, premiered, with Hollywood in-jokes aplenty. Unfortunately, it didn't have audience aplenty, and was soon scrapped (to be picked up later by FOX for spring '95 airing). Meanwhile, on the first season of *Lois & Clark*, the episode "All Shook Up," paid homage to the '50s *Superman's* "Panic In The Sky" episode.

NBC debuted Paramount's futuristic techno-drama, *Viper*, from the team that created *The Flash*. Faster

than a speeding, state-of-the-art sports car, the show was gone. Over on FOX, the long-awaited superhero pilot, *M.A.N.T.I.S.*, had its two-hour premiere. The show's producers were *Darkman* creator Sam Raimi and *Batman* screenwriter Sam Hamm. The story of a crippled African-American chemist who develops an exo-skeleton to fight crime caught the audience's attention. A series was quickly commissioned for fall.

The Universal Action Pack premiered this month, with William Shatner's *TekWar* first up. Greg Evigan starred as Detective Jake Cardigan, who works for Walter Bascom (William Shatner) at the Cosmos Detective Agency. The syndicated SF show *Time Trax* returned to start its second (and final) season.

On Broadway, there was no tomorrow for *Annie Warbucks*. The long-troubled, big-budget stage sequel closed at the end of January due to bad weather, which brought worse attendance. On a non-hard-knock note, a cast album appeared in stores.

Cesar Romero, the longtime Joker on the perpetually rerun *Batman* TV series, died of complications from pneumonia on Jan. 1, at age 86.

FEBRUARY

Rob Liefeld and Roustabout released to me a three-minute



"Youngblood Promo" for their proposed animated series on CBS. Also in the running for a fall series were Erik Larsen's *The Savage Dragon* (from Nelvana, with Mark Evanier producing), with Jim Lee's *WildC.A.T.s*

(also from Nelvana, with David Weiss producing) and Erik Larsen's *Freak Force* (from Universal, with Will Meugniot producing). *Youngblood* later became embroiled in controversy when Liefeld pulled the property from CBS over what he deemed as censorial actions, and Roustabout and Extreme Studios engaged in a spate of lawsuits against each other.

Universal Action Pack released the pilot film, *KnightRider 2010*, updating the original long-running series to cyber-futuristic arenas. It disappeared faster than *Viper*.

Voice actor Olan Soule died Feb. 1 in Los Angeles, at 84. Soule did live-action work on *Captain Midnight*, *Twilight Zone* and others, but we best remember his work as Bruce

Wayne/Batman and Alfred in Filmation's '60s *The Adventures Of Batman*. He later reprised the Dark Knight for the various incarnations of ABC's *SuperFriends* (1973-1984), and the role of the second half of Firestorm, Martin Stein, on *SuperFriends: The Legendary Super Powers Show* and *Super Powers Team: Galactic Guardians* (1984-1986).

MARCH

USA Network premiered the hilarious animated *Duckman* series, based on Everett Peck's Dark Horse comic series, paired with the sexist movie spin-off, *Weird Science*.

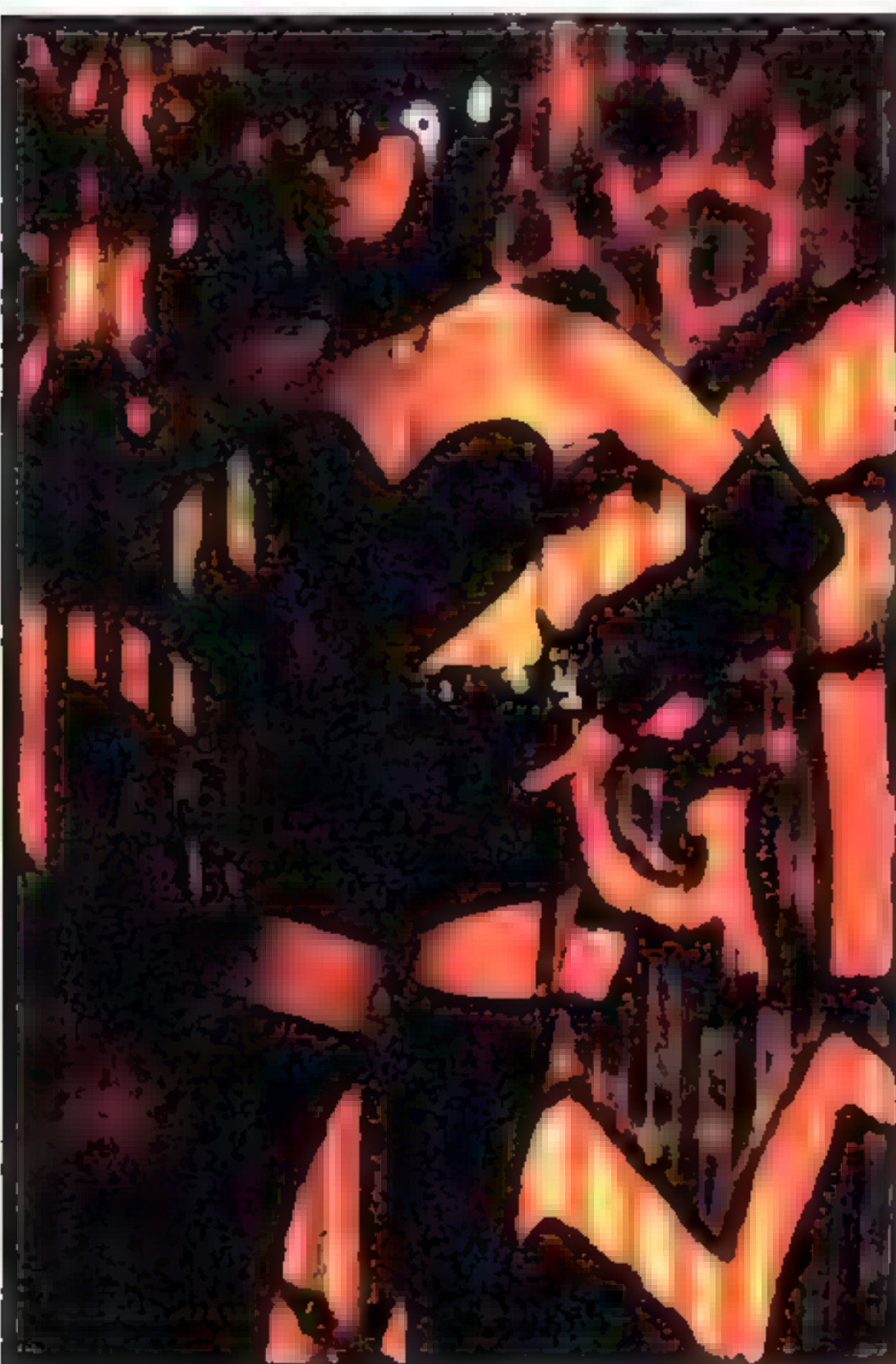
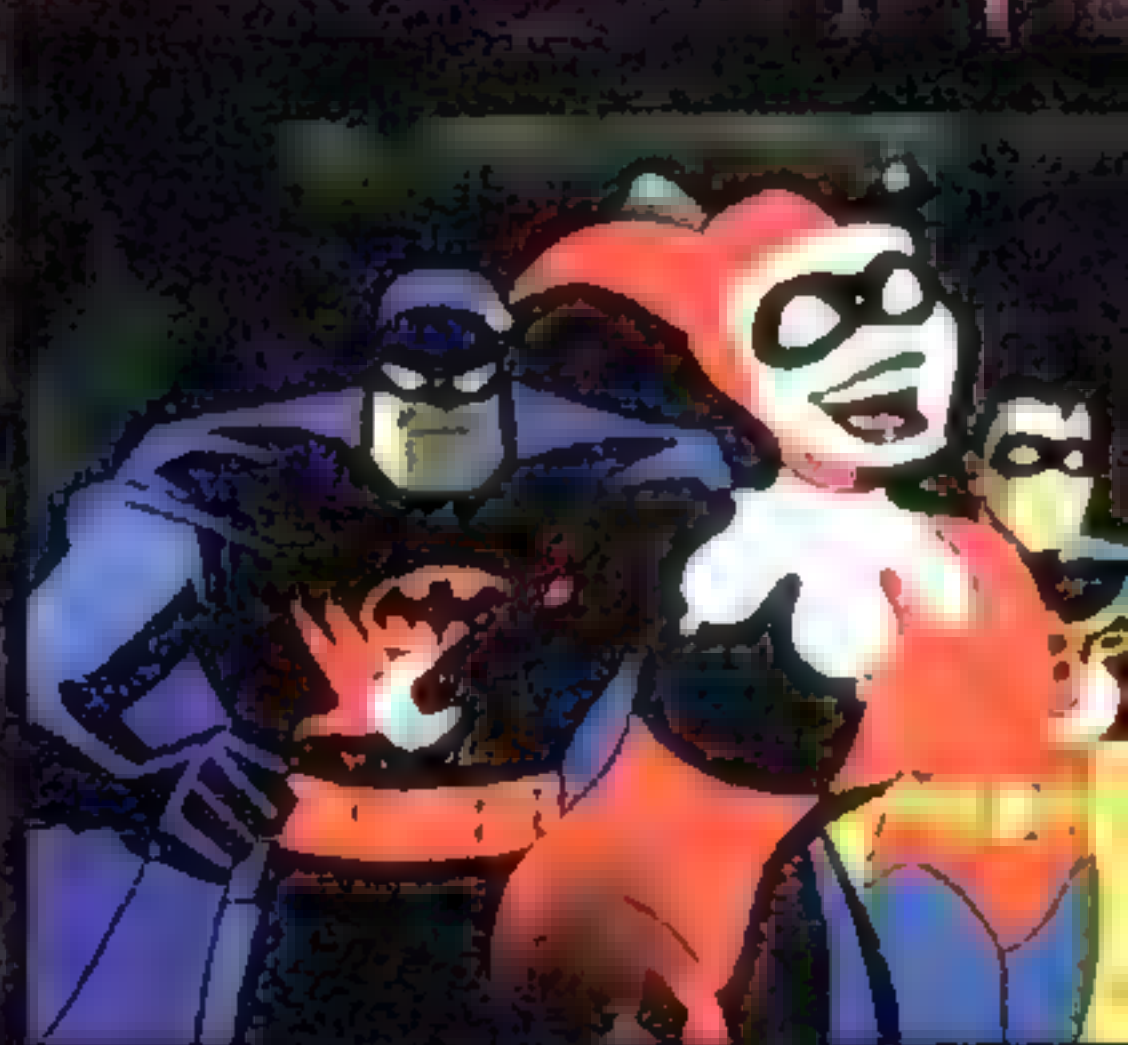
Yet another actor stepped into the RoboCop armor for the syndicated *RoboCop: The Series*. Richard Eden, a soap actor from *Santa Barbara*, played the cyborg lawman. At least one episode was adapted from a

Dark Horse miniseries.

The *Model By Day* telefilm, delayed from last year on FOX, premiered opposite the Academy Awards. Model-turned-actress Famke Janssen starred as Lex, a beautiful fashion model who turns to costumed crime-fighting as "Lady X" when her roommate and best friend is attacked in Central Park. Shannon Tweed (who's long wanted to do comic book heroine *Delta Tenn*) and Sean Young (once cast as Vicki Vale and Tess Trueheart, *not* cast as Catwoman, now cast as *The Black Cat*) also starred. Comic book writer Joseph Loeb (*Challengers of the Unknown* among others) and Matthew Weisman wrote the script—and co-produced—adapting from Kevin J. Taylor's comic series.

An animated version of *Hans Christian Anderson's Thumbelina* (Warner, March 30) appeared in theaters, but it quickly shrank out of sight. Neither children nor adults seemed interested in watching a toon with the voice of Barry Manilow.

Dack Rambo, star of *Dallas* and *Another World*, died of complications from AIDS on Monday, March 21. Few people remember that Rambo played a superheroic Robin Hood-like



detective named "Jack Cole" (also the creator of Plastic Man) in the short-lived *Sword of Justice* on NBC in 1978. Though the series only lasted 10 episodes and has never been rerun, I can still remember Rambo's TV exit line/calling card: an ace of spades that read, "The Spade is the Sword of Justice. Its Rapier Marks the End." A tip of the sword and an ace card to Rambo, a childhood hero.

Also lost this month were animation giant and *Woody Woodpecker* creator Walter Lantz, who died March 22 and Francis Gifford, a retired film actress who died Jan. 22 at the age of 72. Gifford played the role of *Nyoka*, *The Jungle Girl* in a 1941 serial. *Nyoka* was based on a character in Fawcett comics, publishers of the Captain Marvel adventures.

APRIL

Savoy released two genre pics this month. John Waters' sickly hilarious *Serial Mom* (April 13) was one of the funniest and most twisted "mainstream" films to grace screens since Pater Jackson's *Dead Alive* (and what a double feature those two films would make!). Gale Ann Hurd's science-fiction prison film, *No Escape* (April 29), went directly into solitary confinement.

Disney was caught red-faced and em-bare-ased at the revelation of naughty high jinks in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* Laserdisc owners could freeze-frame portions of the film and note that Jessica Rabbit is pantyless for several frames, Baby Herman puts his finger where it doesn't belong, and Toon Town bathrooms had interesting graffiti.

Disney had good news, however, with the opening of *Beauty and the Beast: A New Musical* on Broadway, complete with an all-star, award-winning cast and several new songs.

MAY

Stephen King's *The Stand*, scripted by King himself, aired this month as a four-part, eight-hour miniseries on ABC. Mick Garris, who also directed King's *Sleepwalkers*, shot the film in Utah, with an all-star cast of hundreds. The film was better than anyone expected, featuring great performances by Gary Sinise as Stu Redman, Molly Ringwald as Frannie Goldsmith, Rob Lowe as deaf mute Nick Andros and Bill Fagerbakke as

the retarded Tom Cullen. King's best book also became his best TV adaptation. Check out the fantastic soundtrack by W.G. Snuffy Walden for an hour of aural pleasure.

The two-part season wrap-up of *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures Of Superman* had Luthor making a shocking takeover of the Daily Planet, whisking Lois Lane up the wedding aisle and trapping Superman in a Kryptonite cage. Unfortunately for Luthor, he also fell to his death. Ooops. In a great bit of casting, the '50s' Lois Lane, Phyllis Coates, played Lois' mother.

In a surprising—and unannounced—move, FOX scheduled five new

Batman: The Animated Series episodes to air this month.

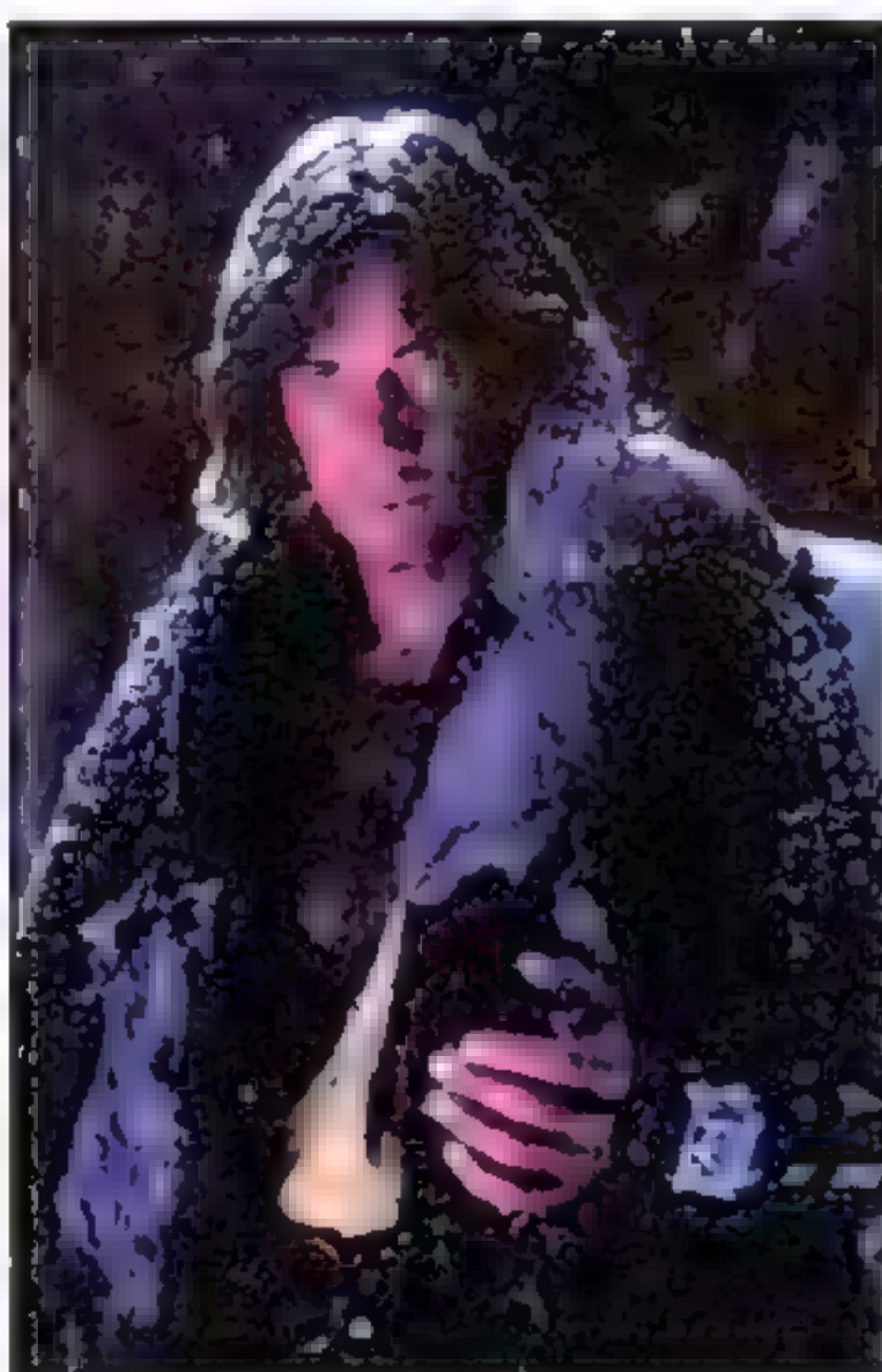
Universal Action Pack premiered Sam Raimi's light-hearted and action-packed *Hercules* films, bringing to the screen—for the first time—a hairy-chested Hercules!

Hoping to make a rajah's ransom on the video market, Disney released the direct-to-video *The Return of Jafar*, an animated sequel to *Aladdin*. The video was a huge success, and another video release is being prepared for mid-1995.

After a spate of well-publicized, big-city talent searches for a "new" actor to portray Robin in *Batman Forever*, the producers chose the much-too-old-for-the-part Chris O'Donnell (*Scent of a Woman*) to don the togs and mask of Robin. Casting of Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones) and the Riddler (Robin Williams) had already been completed, and Michael Keaton was expected to sign on.

A little more than a year after the accidental shooting death of its star, Brandon Lee, *The Crow* was finally released on Friday, May 13. A combination of computer-generated imagery (CGI), body doubles and rewritten scenes helped cover up not only the unfinished scenes, but also the sequences surrounding the shooting. *The Crow* was a financial and critical success, and producer Ed Pressman announced a sequel forthcoming, with a female lead. Check out the excellent "Original Score" by Graeme Revell, which out-moods the too-noisy "Soundtrack" album.

Universal released the live-action *Flintstones* film (May 27), starring John Goodman as Fred Flintstone, Rick Moranis as Barney Rubble, Rosie O'Donnell as Betty, Elizabeth Perkins as Wilma and Liz Taylor as Wilma's bossy mom. Although box office returns were good, the film





should largely be viewed as a curiosity of how a cartoon can be translated too closely to live-action. Unfortunately, we're likely to see more in the future, with live versions of *The Jetsons*, *Scooby-Doo*, *Jonny Quest* and others on the way.

JUNE

FX, a new cable channel premiered June 1 in most of the U.S., with many great blasts from the past for comic fans. Superhero reruns included the funny why-did-it-end? *Greatest American Hero* with William Katt and Robert Culp, the best female hero series ever, *Wonder Woman*, the campy crusader *Batman*, spies galore in *Mission: Impossible* and the long-missing *Green Hornet* series.

The highly effective and moody *Wolf* (Columbia, June 17) hit the screens, starring Jack Nicholson as Will Randall, a Manhattan book editor bitten by a wolf, who soon finds himself becoming more animal than man. He falls in love with Laura Alden (Michelle Pfeiffer), and comes up against a truly slimy James Spader in the boardroom and the forests.

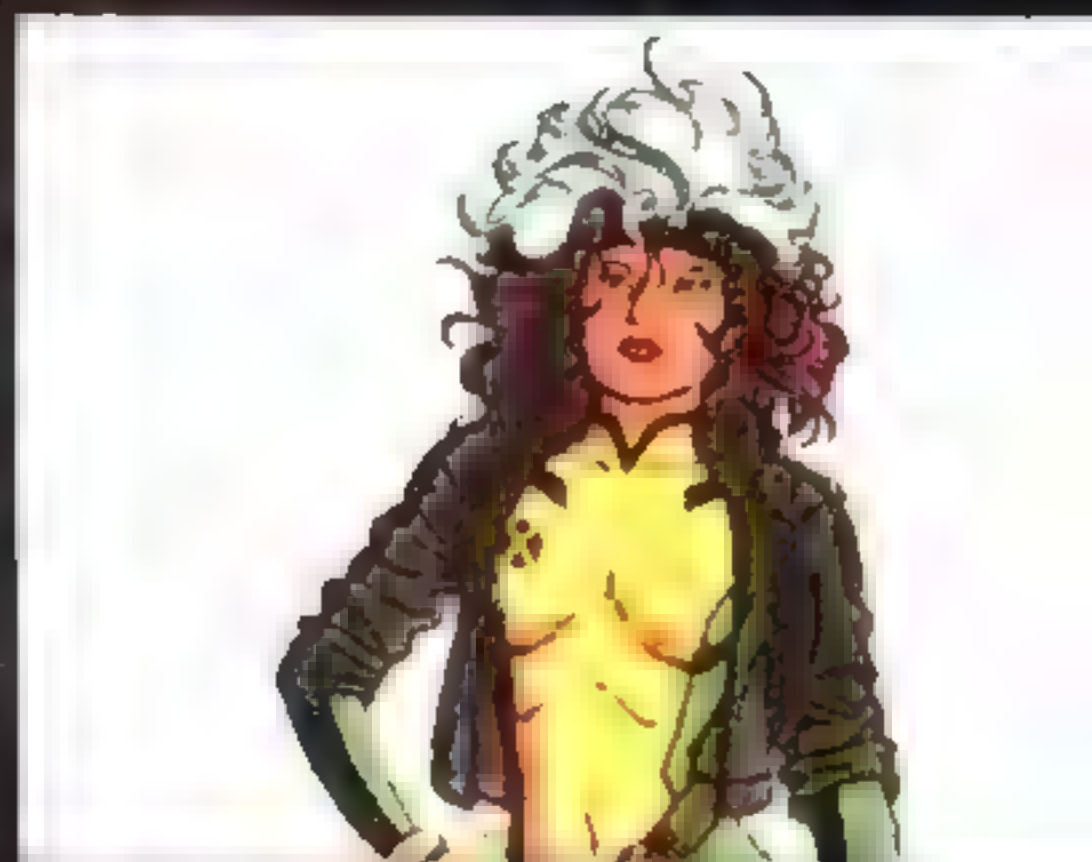
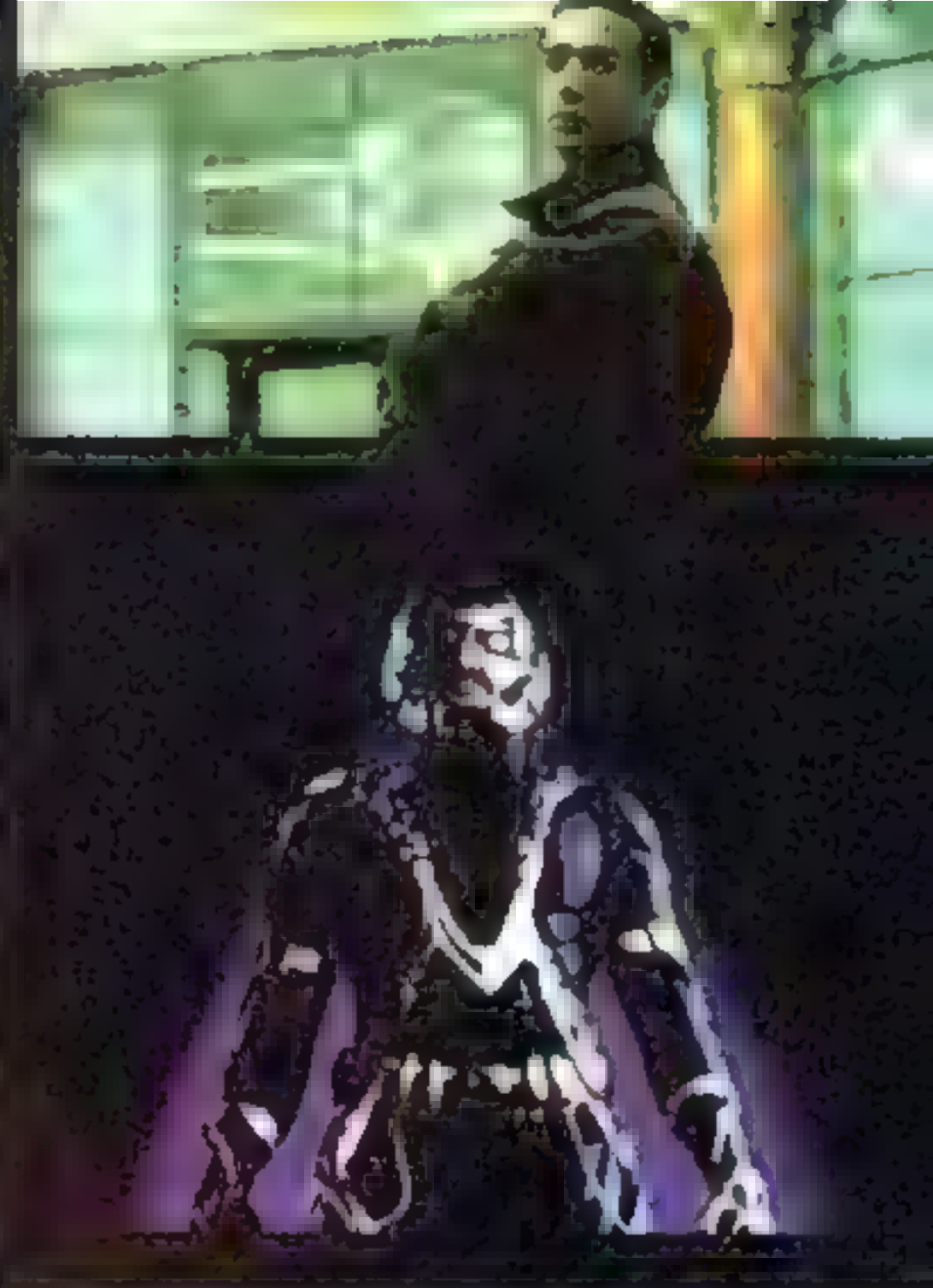
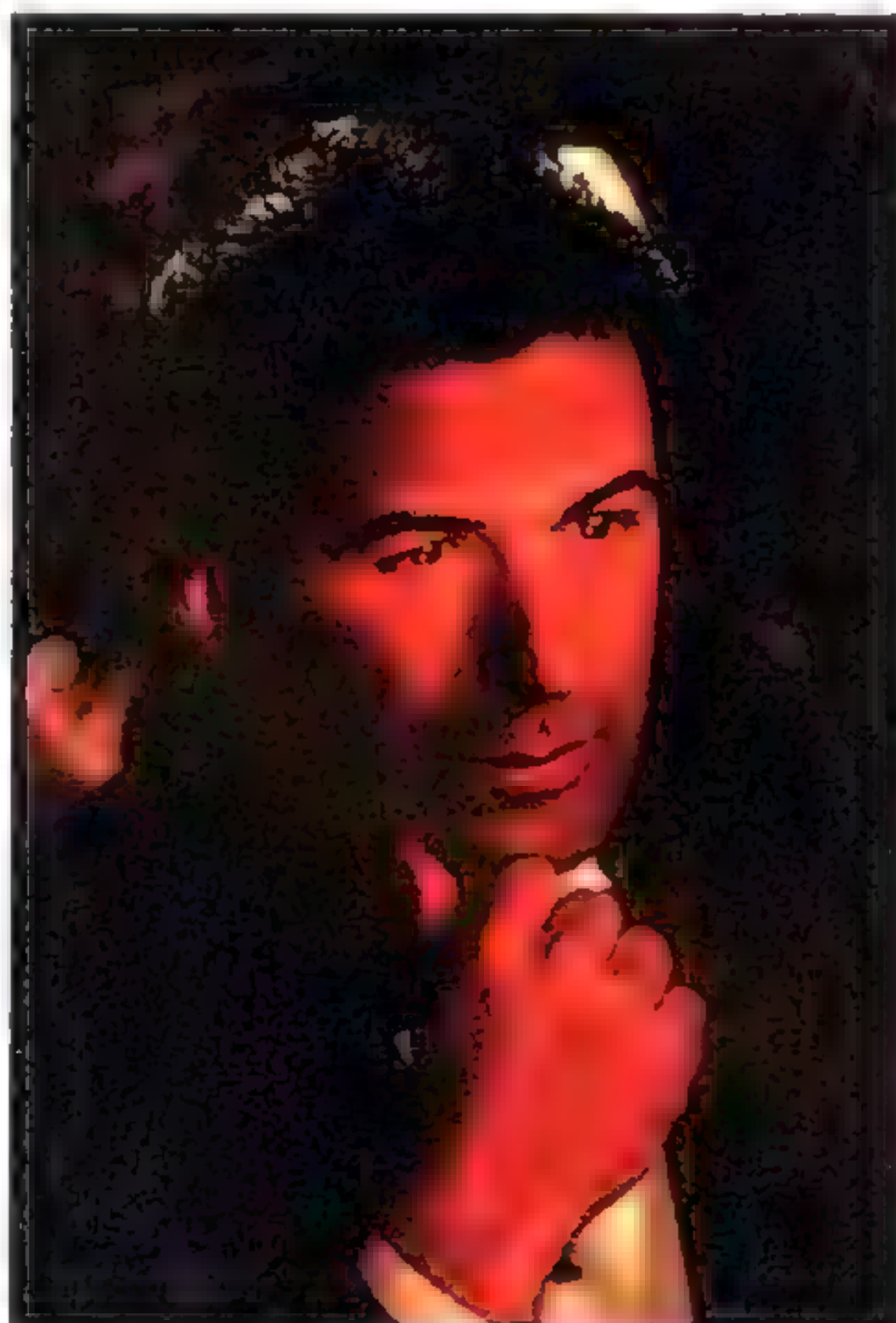
Disney released yet another big hit animated film with *The Lion King* (June 15), the story of a British monarch who can't seem to tell the truth—wait, that's *The Lyin' King*. Young Simba and friends gained the trust of youngsters and adults, while Elton John and Tim Rice's songs described why eating other animals wasn't predatory but beautiful. Some groups felt that the film had anti-black stereotypes (the hyenas) and anti-gay stereotypes (Simba's uncle), failing to note that not all of the hyenas were voiced by black actors, or that Timon the meerkat and Pumbaa the warthog could be seen as positive—possibly gay—characters.

JULY

Casting crisis across the genre

board abound in Hollywood. Following the defection of Robin Williams, Jim Carrey stepped into the role of Edward Nigma/The Riddler and Robin Wright (*The Princess Bride*) took the job of Chase Meridian, Bruce Wayne's new lady love, in *Batman Forever*. Meanwhile, ex-*Remington Steele* star Pierce Brosnan was named as the new James Bond in a trio of films, starting with *Golden Eye*. And Lori Petty (*A League Of Their Own*) took over the title role in MGM/UA's *Tank Girl* film, from the departing Emily Lloyd, who didn't want to shave her head for the role.

Alec Baldwin played *The Shadow* (Universal, July 1) in a sumptuously filmed, big-budget film, but audiences yawned. I have rarely been so bored by a big-budget action film, including *Last Action Hero*. The soundtrack, by Jerry Goldsmith, is great though. Speaking of Schwarzenegger, his fortunes were buoyed by the success of the overly long actioner *True Lies*



(Fox, July 15).

The real muscle of the summer was the surprise hit *The Mask* (New Line, July 29), a wacky, violent, comedy film based on several Dark Horse comic series. With a \$20 million budget—New Line Cinema's biggest in-house production budget yet—*The Mask* was the first live-action film that perfectly captured the energy and crazy physics of an old Tex Avery or Chuck Jones cartoon. Elastic-faced Jim Carrey, on a roll from *Ace Ventura*, *Pet Detective*, became the yellow-suited, lime-faced hero of the year, aided by incredible CGI effects by Ken Ralston, Lucasfilm's Industrial Light and Magic and Greg Cannon.

AUGUST

Batman Forever casting went awry yet again when Michael Keaton stunned Hollywood by backing out of all future *Batman* film projects, turning down not only an expected paycheck of \$35 million (\$15 mill upfront with 10 percent of worldwide gross), but also all future licensing. Faster than you can say "I'm your huckleberry, Riddler," director Joel Schumacher announced a replacement for Keaton. The underrated Val Kilmer, who had his most popular role in *Tombstone* (though he's also appeared in the hilarious *Top Secret* and the not-so-funny *Top Gun*) signed on for not only *Batman Forever*, but also several future *Batman* sequels. Meanwhile, the part of Chase Meridian changed hands from Robin Wright to Rene Russo to Sandra Bullock. Other potentials included models Cindy Crawford and Elle Macpherson, but eventually Mrs. Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, got the part. Production started before anyone else could change their minds.

The only superhero movie of the year was the "comedy," *Blankman* (Columbia, Aug. 19), starring Damon Wayans in the title role of the nerd who fights crime in red long-johns, a flower-print curtain cape, red argyle socks as a mask and yellow latex gloves. Audiences refused to fill in the blank, man, staying home to shampoo the cactus plants instead.

Veteran genre film actor Peter Cushing died of cancer on Aug. 11, at 81. Cushing did many horror films in the '50s and '60s, and was famous for portraying Sherlock Holmes. He also

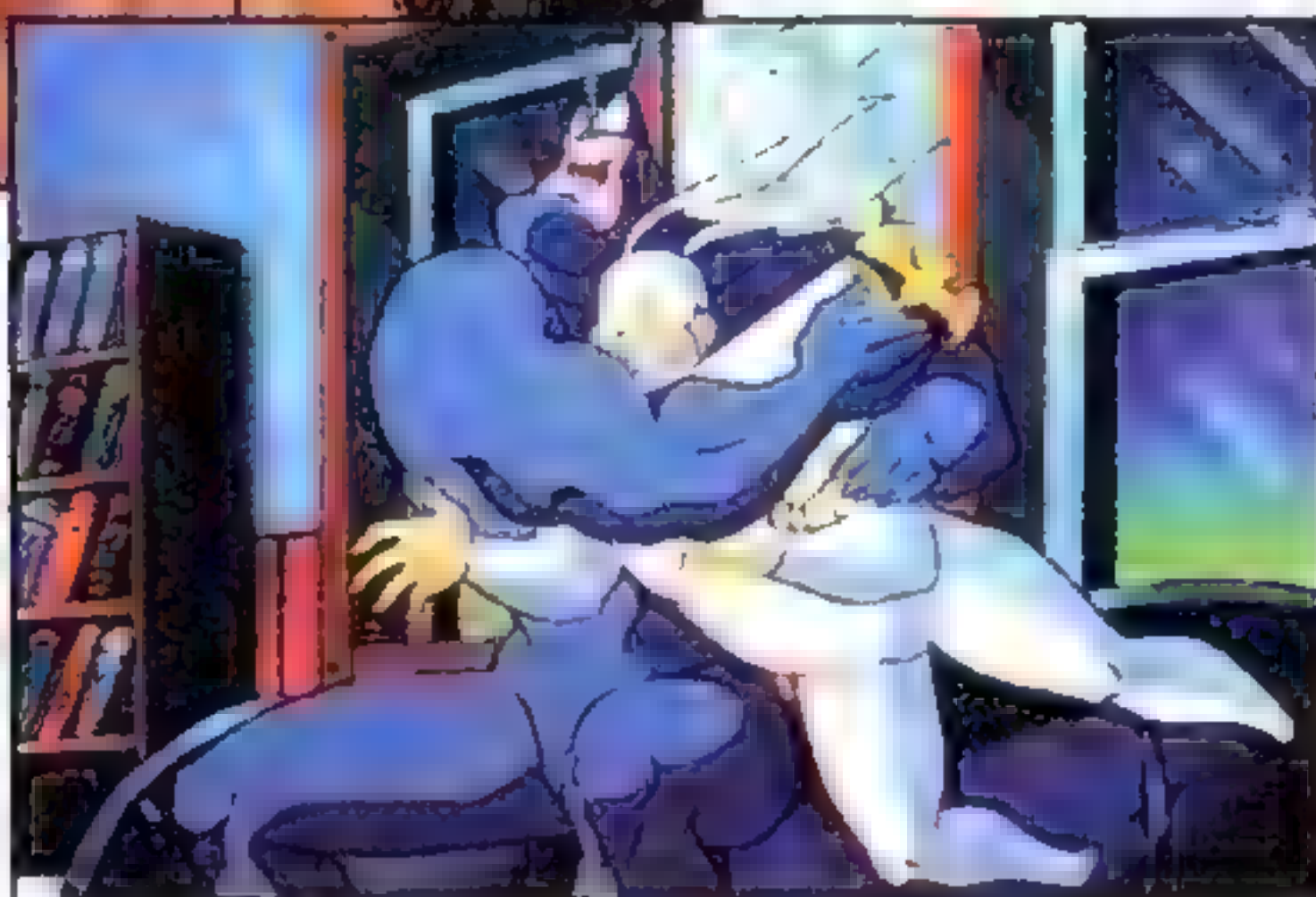
played Grand Moff Tarkin in *Star Wars* and Grimsdyke in 1972's *Tales From The Crypt* film.

SEPTEMBER

ABC's Saturday morning schedule saw the return of *Tales from the Crypt-Keeper* (Nelvana, second season), now guest-starring the Old Witch and the Vault-Keeper, while CBS introduced *Beethoven* (Universal, new), *Disney's Aladdin*, the toy-based *Skeleton Warriors* (Graz/Landmark, new) and more *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Fred Wolf, fifth season).

FOX premiered the retitled *The*

Adventures of Batman & Robin, with 10 new episodes, all featuring Robin (Warner, new) and *X-Men*, with 22 new episodes (Saban, third season), led off by a five-part story called "The Birth of the Phoenix."



The hilarious *The Tick*, adapted from Ben Edlund's satiric comic book series also premiered, with great fan reaction (Sunbow, new).

On syndication, *Disney's Aladdin* series launched, with 65 all-new adventures in the land of the Arabian Nights. Many of the vocal actors from the film reprised their roles: Scott Weinger was Aladdin, Linda Larkin was Princess Jasmine, Frank Welker was the monkey Abu and Gilbert Gottfried was the parrot, Iago. Dan Castellaneta of *Homer Simpson* fame replaced Robin Williams as the irrepressible Genie.

Other animated syndication

newcomers were the *Marvel Action Hour*, including a horribly animated *Fantastic Four* and a marginally better *Iron Man*, the spin-off series *Highlander: The Animated Series*, Universal's *Monster Squad*, and the sharply designed *Phantom 2040* series, incorporating the look of Peter Chung's *Aeon Flux* series.

Returning on prime time for more seasons were ABC's *Lois & Clark*, with new cast members and more supervillains, NBC's *seaQuest DSV*, with new cast members, a new ship, and new alien villains, plus FOX's mysterious hit *The X-Files*, with the same characters and villains.

New to FOX was *M.A.N.T.I.S.*, spun off into its own series. Like the other prime-time shows above, the series removed most of the cast (replacing almost all the black characters with white characters), changed the armor and ship and added new supervillains and aliens! The series premiered well, but sank to the bottom of the bug cage very quickly.

Syndication returns included *Highlander: The Series*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *Forever Knight*, switching from its late-night CBS berth.

On the big screen, Dark Horse scored lower numbers with their second comic-based film of the year, *TimeCop* (Universal, Sept. 16). Although the Jean-Claude Van Damme-starrer kicked up a healthy profit, don't expect a sequel.

Stephen King had yet another success with Frank Darabont's adaptation of *The Shawshank Redemption* (Columbia, Sept. 23). The film starred Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman as two jail mates, and is one of the bleakest yet uplifting films I've seen in years. Oscar nominations for the lead actors seem a possibility, and King has one more great film to add to the small pile of great films based

on his numerous works. George Lucas was so impressed by Darabont's job scripting and directing, he brought the writer on to script the first *Star Wars* movie (over a Lucas storyline)!

In other Oscar possibility news, Martin Landau's turn as Bela Lugosi may win him the trophy. He joined the angora sweater-wearing Johnny Depp in Tim Burton's *Ed Wood* (Touchstone, Sept. 28), a touching and often hilarious biography of one of Hollywood's most widely known weirdos. Unfortunately, the film did poorly at the box office. Rent it on video!

Robert Bloch, famed suspense and horror novelist, died Sept. 23 in Los Angeles, at 77. Having sold his first story to *Weird Tales* when he was 17, Bloch remained prolific with more than 400 published stories and 20 novels. He is most famous for his novel-turned-film, *Psycho*, and he wrote episodes of *Star Trek*, *Night Gallery*, *Tales from the Darkside* and dozens of other TV shows, as well as films. His story, "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper," was the start of my lifelong interest in Ripperology, prompting me to write my own Ripper stories in *Nightmares On Elm Street* #1 & 2 (Innovation) dedicated to Bloch, in the *Troll Halloween Special* (Image) and in an unpublished two-part *Star Trek: Next Generation* story for DC. Robert Bloch fed my mind with both literate and frightening images. May his next life be as productive and inspiring.

OCTOBER

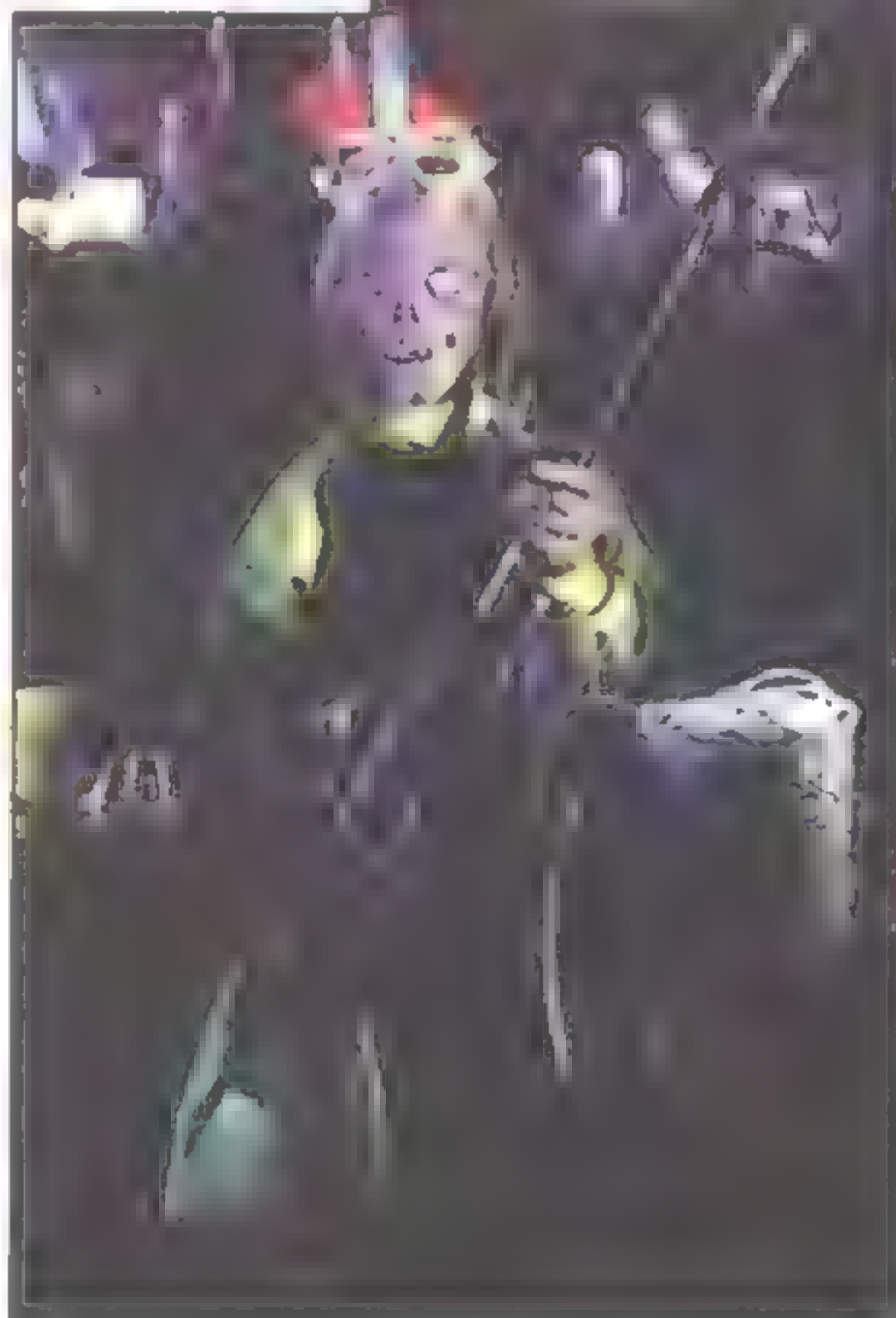
Disney's gothic answer to Batman premiered this month. The sharp-looking and surprisingly adult *Gargoyles* started with a five-part afternoon serial, and an all-star voice cast including Kieth David, Ed Asner, Jeff Bennett, Thom Adcox, *Coach*'s Bill Fagerbakke, *Space Rangers*' Salli Richardson, the ever-present Frank Welker and *Star Trek* stars Jonathan Frakes, Marina Sirtis, Michael Dorn, Nana Visitor and Avery Brooks!

The first ever Image cartoon series to appear on television was Jim Lee's *WildC.A.T.s*, which finally made it to the air (only a month late) with a brightly colored, toned-down version of the comic series. Ratings have been okay, but not impressive, largely due to the huge number of preemptions by football.

USA insulted our intelligence with a truly stupid, live-action superhero series, *Tattooed Teenage Alien Fighters From Beverly Hills*. As if the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* weren't proof enough that the Apocalypse is imminent, yet another

sign has been given. Can anyone tell me if *T.T.A.F.F.B.H.* is listed in the book of Revelations?

Speaking of books, a year after HBO closed up shop on the *Tales from the Crypt*, the cackling Crypt-Keeper returned for yet another 15

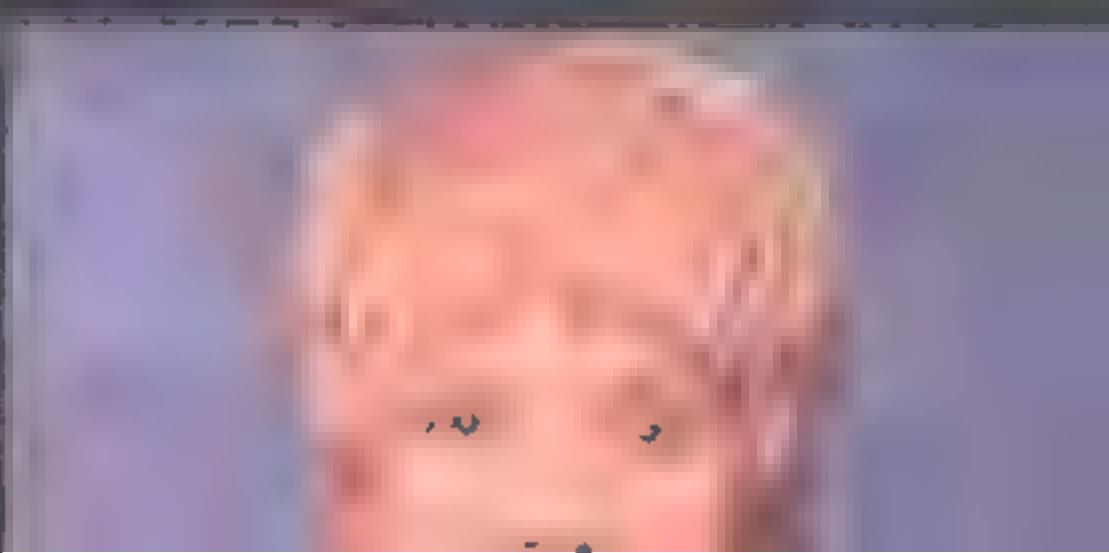
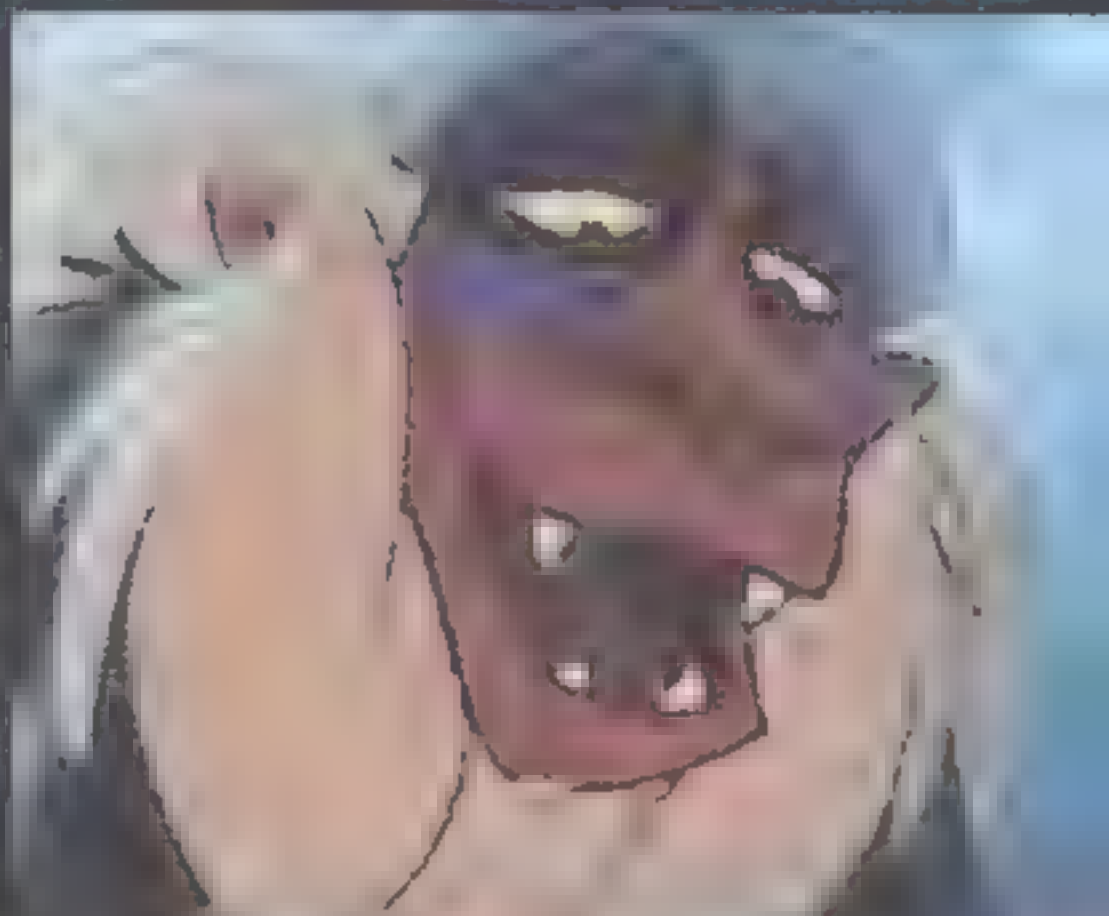
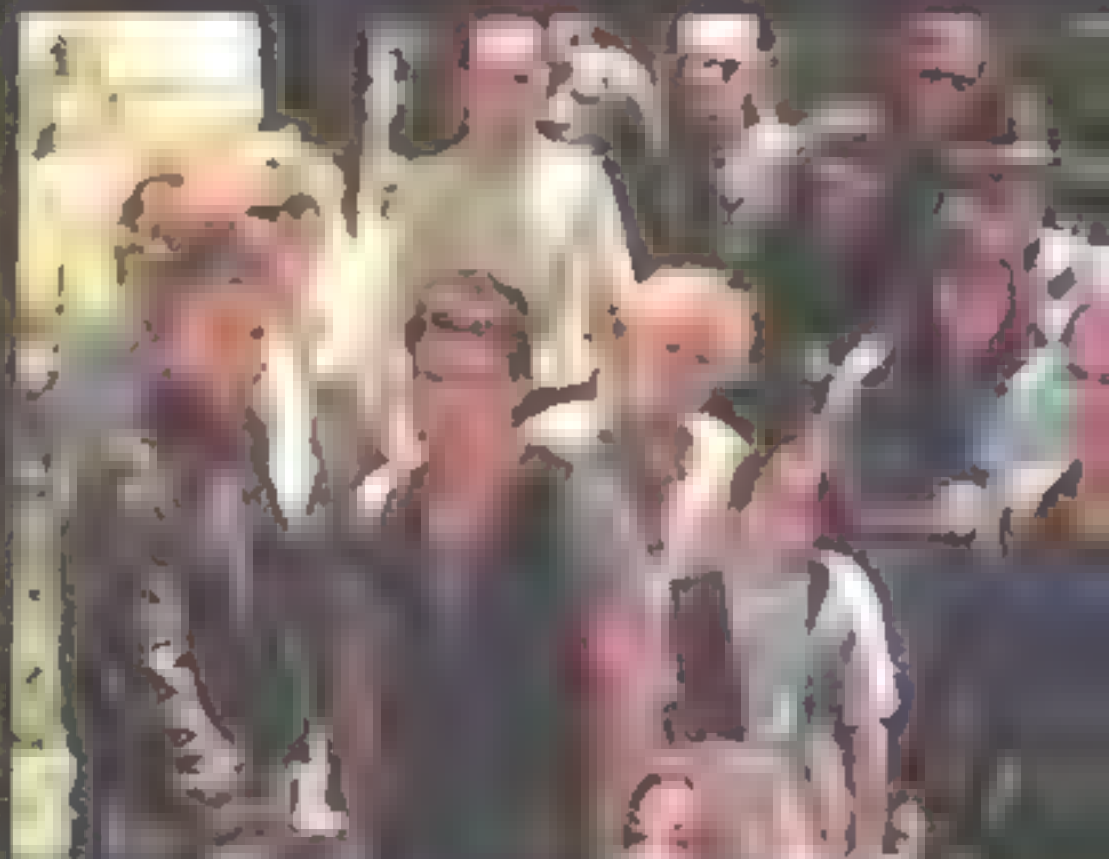


episodes of the star-studded horror anthology. With new *Crypts* on HBO, reruns on Fox, cartoons on ABC, a *Crypt* movie in theaters in January and a toy line, when will enough be enough? Can't keep a good ghoul down ... unless you staple his head to the coffin.

Babylon 5 started its second season in syndication, with Bruce

Boxleitner taking command of the station from the departing Michael O'Hare. Universal's Action Pack also returned with more cool *Hercules* telefilms, gearing up for the regular series in January. Yet another series that would not die had yet another telefilm; *Young Indiana Jones and the Hollywood Follies* aired on the Family Channel, the first of four new Lucasfilm movies to star Sean Patrick Flanery.

On the big screen, Don Bluth's animated *A Troll In Central Park* (Warner, Oct. 7) disappeared without a trace, but Disney/ Touchstone's cool and spooky version of Robert



Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters* (Hollywood, Oct. 21) was well worth a trip to the movie house.

Although it seemed almost everyone in Hollywood wanted the huge-budget *Stargate* (MGM, Oct. 21) to fail, director Roland Emmerich and Carolco studio head Mario Kassar had the last laugh. With cool CGI effects, an eerie performance by Jaye Davidson as the Michael Jackson-like King Ra, and capable work by Kurt Russell and the usually annoying James Spader, *Stargate* became the hit nobody expected it to be. Needless to say, Kassar is already planning a sequel.

The only true Halloween film was Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* (New Line, Oct. 14), returning Freddy Krueger to the screen. With Englund and original film stars Heather Langenkamp and John Saxon playing themselves, along with Craven and New Line head Bob Shaye, the movie had a surreal air unlike any horror film in recent history. Some moments, such as a scene on a busy freeway, had me gripping the chair in tension. I had fun pointing out people I knew and places I had been in the New Line offices (back when I wrote the *Nightmares on Elm Street* comic), but was amused when my friend asked how much of the film had been based on my comic stories. Now that he mentioned it, there were some similarities, especially when it came to Freddy's domain.... Guess great minds think alike.

Raul Julia, who delighted audiences everywhere with his wonderful role as Gomez in

two recent *Addams Family* movies, died Oct. 24 due to complications from a stroke. The films were some of his only on-screen genre projects.

NOVEMBER

FOX's long-awaited *Spider-Man* cartoon finally got a one-shot special on Saturday, Nov. 19. The premiere episode, "Night of the Lizard," looked great, with lots of action and some

fantastic 3-D and CGI backgrounds. I can't believe I'm actually looking forward to a new Marvel series! *Spider-Man* will be back for a regular series in February 1995.

On *X-Men*, sweeps week generated the four-part "The Dark Phoenix Saga," introducing a whole host of new characters and adapting (fairly faithfully) the Claremont-Byrne comic classic of the last decade.

On prime time, NBC premiered *Earth 2*, its lead-in to *seaQuest*

DSV, and the second NBC series from Steven Spielberg's Amblin company. With a strong cast, arid climates and cool-looking alien species, what could make the show better? Regular guest-shots by Tim Curry? You got it.

The video game-based *Double Dragon* (Gramercy, Nov. 4) appeared to the sound of no hands clapping, followed by the big budget *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Tri-Star, Nov. 4). Critic favorite Kenneth Branagh directed the film, and played Doctor Frankenstein, with Robert De Niro as the monster. Unfortunately, the mobs stayed away like the monster from fire.

A sequel is unlikely.

Sequels are likely, though, for *Interview With the Vampire* (Warner, Nov. 11) and *Star Trek: Generations* (Paramount, Nov. 11), two of the most eagerly awaited and controversial films of the year. Anne Rice's final blessing of Tom Cruise as Lestat in *Vampire* precursed his bravura turn as a nasty Victorian villain, but Rice should really have worried about Brad Pitt, who walked through his role like one of the undead, showing as little emotion as Kim Basinger on a good day. Meanwhile, the *Star Trek* franchise continued with the much publicized—and poorly handled—death of James T. Kirk, and a horrible model shot of the Enterprise crashing on a planet that harkened back to the days of the serial *Flash Gordon* with its poor special effects. Still, Patrick Stewart's Picard almost saved the film, though Brent Spiner's story line and acting did everything it could to doom it.

Disney made a preemptive strike on the competition by rereleasing *The Lion King* (Disney, Nov. 18), which meant not as many people went to see the lushly animated *The Swan Princess* (New Line, Nov. 18).

Animated by a crew of ex-Disney pros, the film features a high-class roster of vocal talents, including Jack Palance, John Cleese, comedian Steven Wright and Sandy Duncan. Also hurt by Disney's move was *The Pagemaster* (Fox, Nov. 23), a charming film featuring another all-star voice cast. *Pagemaster* promoted literacy while it entertained. Not a bad goal for a film.

DECEMBER

This month, MTV debuted *MTV Oddities*, a new weekly animated series featuring "strange characters in unusual worlds." While this could describe *Beavis & Butt-head*, it's actually describing Eric Fogel's truly weird *The Head*, and Sam Kieth's *The Maxx*! Unfortunately, *The Maxx* won't be showing up until March 1995.

HBO aired a sequel to their "monster" hit, *Cast A Deadly Spell*, written by Joe Dougherty, the original scripter. The new film, *Witch-hunt*, starred Dennis Hopper (taking over the title role from Fred Ward) as Detective



Phillip Lovecraft, a man who won't use magic on an alternate world where everyone does magic. Mix in a mysterious murder, a magical blacklist and Red Scare-like witch-hunt, and the resulting film has me wanting yet another sequel.

Christmas brought with it a trio of genre films. Macaulay Culkin starred in the comic book-based *Richie Rich* (Warner, Dec. 21), probably the last film he'll ever have any level of success in. Jean-Claude Van Damme made yet another action film, this one based on the video game *Street Fighter* (Universal, Dec. 23). Unfortunately, it was also Raul Julia's last film, and thus was a poor epitaph for his career.

Finally, the live-action *Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book* (Disney, Dec. 25) was sumptuous and exciting, with the animalistic Jason Scott Lee starring as Mowgli. Sam Neill, the underrated Cary Elwes and John Cleese also turned in great performances.

COMING UP...

What's on tap for 1995? A lot more comic projects than 1994, and a lot more genre projects than ever in entertainment history:

On the small screen, there are likely renewals for *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures Of Superman*, *Earth 2*, *seaQuest DSV*, *Highlander*, *Hercules*, *TekWar*, *Babylon 5*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, *Star Trek: Voyager*, *Forever Knight* and *X-Files*, plus animated returns for *Duckman*, *The Simpsons*, *X-Men*, *Fantastic Four*, *Iron Man*, *The Tick*, *Tales from the Crypt-Keeper*, *Phantom 2040*, *Highlander: The Animated Series*, *Adventures of Batman & Robin* and (tentatively) *WildC.A.T.s*.

Look for new animated series for *The Maxx* (MTV, March), *The Critic* (FOX, spring), *The Mask* (CBS, fall), *Spider-Man* (FOX, February) and possibly *Judge Dredd* (syndicated,



fall), Marc Silvestri's *CyberForce* (FOX, winter), Rob Liefeld's *Youngblood* (FOX, winter) and Todd McFarlane's *Spawn* (HBO, winter).

New live-action series include Showtime's *Outer Limits* (March) and the alternate reality show *Sliders* (FOX, spring).

On the big screen, look for a horror-oriented winter quarter with *Tales From The Crypt: Demon Knight*, *In the Mouth of Madness*, *Highlander: The Final Dimension*, *Lord Of Illusions*, *The*

Mangler, *Candyman: Farewell To Flesh*, *Tank Girl*, *Dolores Claiborne*, *Hellraiser IV: Bloodlines* and *The Pebble and the Penguin*.

Spring brings with it more comedy and action, including *The Goofy Movie*, *Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Casper* and *Braveheart*.

Look for an all-action summer face-off with *Mary Reilly*, *Congo*, *Species*, *Batman Forever*, *Pocahontas*, *Judge Dredd*, *Cutthroat Island*, *Waterworld*, *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, *First Knight* and *Johnny Mnemonic*.

Fall and early winter will yield some familiar faces and characters with remakes and sequels aplenty.



Coming up are *Loch Ness*, *Village of the Damned*, *Mission Impossible*, *Toy Story*, *James Bond: Golden Eye*, *All Dogs Go To Heaven 2*, *Jumanji*, *The Saint*, *The Phantom* and *Vampire In Brooklyn*.

Keep up with all the newest and hottest Hollywood news every month in *HERO ILLUSTRATED*, in the column that's got everybody reading and talking ... Andy Mangels' *Hollywood Heroes!*



HERO Presents As The Universe Turns!

10+

Are superhero comics really just soap operas where the men wear tights? Let's see who did what to whom and why. When we last saw our heroes...

DC

Aquaman

Aquaman grew out his facial and head hair, fought Superboy, Lobo and learned of his hidden heritage. He also lost his left hand and replaced it with a harpoon.

Batman Family

Azrael/Batman turned the Bat-costume into a battle suit. Bruce got his broken back fixed, came back and reclaimed the role of Batman, then left to find himself. Dick Grayson acted as Batman in the interim. Bruce came back again, this time with a new costume and a new attitude. Robin was pleased with Bruce's return as well as being allowed in the Batcave again.

Somewhere during this time, Batman also fought Spawn, the Punisher and another Predator.

Meanwhile, Catwoman was captured by the government and given a choice between life imprisonment or an assignment. She took the latter, which led to someone trying to marry her.

Damage

In the course of a few days, Grant Emerson blew up his high school, found out his parents weren't his parents, was captured by Symbolix, escaped, fought Troll several times, met Wyldheart, trashed Atlanta, fought the New Titans and created the universe in Zero Hour. Allowing himself to be brought to trial for the damage to Atlanta, Damage was banned from Georgia and convinced to join the New Titans. Damage is currently trying to decipher the secrets behind who he is and where he came from.

Darkstars

Ferrin Colos was brought up on charges of insubordination during the Trinity debacle, leading to ex-Titan

Donna Troy becoming his replacement. Colos was engulfed in an explosion and believed dead. He was transported to an alternate reality, imprisoned and confronted with an evil duplicate.

Deathstroke

Deathstroke tried explaining to his ex-wife why he had to kill their last son. She shot him, but before she could kill him, she fainted from blood loss from an earlier throat wound. She received a complete blood transfusion, much of it Deathstroke's.

He soon gave up his death wish, then slept with an ancient demon who he would later kill. Wilson was then framed with an assassination attempt on the president. Someone began picking off his friends. Wilson died and came back to life. Someone calling him or herself The Ravager (the first Ravager was Wilson's first son) kidnapped Deathstroke's daughter. Hawkman killed Deathstroke, but he was later resurrected during his autopsy and ran away.

Flash

The addition of Johnny Quick's speed formula to Wally West's own speed enabled him to virtually stop time. Wally's aunt and his cousin Bart traveled to the present from the future. Bart, a speedster, became known as Impulse and joined the New Titans. During Zero Hour, Wally brushed against the "Speed Force," and saw a future vision of the fate that would befall himself and Central/Keystone Cities. Wally realized that as he pushes his speed he comes close to being absorbed by the "Speed Force." He then assembled a team of speedsters to defend Central/Keystone before he disappeared.

Green Arrow

Over the last year, Green Arrow ran afoul of Catwoman, was mistaken for and had his beard trimmed by Deathstroke the Terminator, fought an albino alligator, killed several people, went back to the monastery to try to find inner peace, shaved his head, left (bringing with him a boy who's probably his son) and managed to not be "sanctioned" by the hordes of assassins after him.

Green Lantern

The destruction of Coast City pushed Hal Jordan over the edge. Jordan decimated the Green Lantern Corps, claiming Oa's power for himself. The Guardians of the Universe forged one last power ring and presented it to freelance artist Kyle Rayner. Soon, Rayner's girlfriend was murdered by Major Force. Rayner finally fought Jordan during the Zero Hour conflict, and defeated him by destroying Oa. Returning to Earth, Rayner joined the New Titans and began a relationship with Donna Troy.

Justice League Family

When Overmaster placed Earth in jeopardy, the U.N. forbade the Justice League teams from acting. When they defied that order, the U.N. dropped their sanction. They saved the world, and Ice died. The event split the JL, and they are now three distinct teams. One is led by Diana, one by Captain Atom and one by the Martian Manhunter. It was revealed that, in its earliest days, the JL was joined by Triumph. During his first mission, Triumph was erased from time, until the present day.

Passion!

Legion Family

During Zero Hour, it was revealed that the Time Trapper had been mucking about with time for centuries, resulting in anomalies such as the paradox of Valor. Many of the Legionnaires disappeared and the remaining members sacrificed their existence to effect permanent repairs in time.

In the new 30th century, R.J. Brande was rescued by three

teenagers. Their example, coupled with the *many* heroes of the 20th century, caused Brande to create the Legion of Super-Heroes, a band of heroic young adults who would model the standards of the United Planets. The Legion's ranks swelled with initiates from several UP member worlds. Kid Quantum died. The Legion's success caused Brande's rival, Leland McCauley, to form his own team, led by Legion founder Live Wire.

The Outsiders

The Eradicator returned to the team, Looker became a vampire and Halo switched bodies with Technocrat's wife. The Outsiders invaded Abyssia, where they stopped vampire lord Roderick and exposed his frame on them. They then broke up, though one group continued to operate under the namesake. Katana, Geo-Force and Technocrat didn't like the splinter group using the Outsiders name and struck out after them. Superman attacked the Eradicator. The splinter group then found a new base. Katana had her sword stolen by Lady Shiva, fought for it back, died, came back to life and reclaimed her sword.

Ray

After a run-in with Superboy, Ray learned that his mother wasn't dead. He soon crossed the galaxy with Black Canary, stopping to pick a fight with Lobo on the way back.

Superman Family

Steel became embroiled in a local gang war. He attempted to keep the guns he once designed off the streets.

Meanwhile, Superman left Earth to make sure Doomsday was actually dead. Doomsday had come back to life and made his way to Apokolips. Cyborg returned and the two together threatened to take over the planet. Darkseid battled Doomsday, who nearly killed him. Desaad transported Doomsday away. Darkseid appeared to destroy Cyborg, while capturing him for his own purposes. Superman discovered that Doomsday's creation was the product of Kryptonian cloning experiments and stopped him by transporting him to the end of time.

Back on Earth, Superboy had fallen prey to the same illness that had been plaguing all the clones in the DC Universe and was brought to Project Cadmus.

Supergirl discovered that Luthor had been using her and had tried to create a new body for himself out of her "protomatter" because the clone into which he'd transplanted his brain was dying. She confronted Luthor but Superman kept her from harming him. Luthor's ex-wife became Supergirl's mentor.

Luthor attempted to clone Superman again but Superman's



Kryptonian cells threw off the process, creating another Bizarro. Bizarro was stopped by Cadmus. However, Lexcorp brought him back for experimentation. Bizarro died soon after destroying the findings that Lexcorp culled from his body.

Superman's powers inexplicably grew out of control, bulking him up to amazing proportions. Professor Hamilton explained that Superman had been exposed to an element vaguely similar to Kryptonite that caused Superman's body to go into overdrive. Superman had the criminal Parasite drain off his power. Meanwhile, Lois revealed Luthor's criminal dealings. Parasite became amazingly strong, knocked Supes unconscious and made off.

Cadmus was stormed by earlier experimental clones, armed with weapons supplied by Luthor. Luthor exposed Cadmus' existence to the general public and called for Washington to shut it down. Martial law was declared in Metropolis. Luthor had to be put into a high-tech iron lung to survive. Cadmus was seemingly destroyed, shortly after Superboy was cured. Pete Ross and Lana Lang were married at the Kent home. Fail-safes that Luthor created from weaponry left over from the Invasion were accidentally set off. Superman did what he could to stop the devices, but the city was leveled. Metropolis and Dakota converged because of a metahuman mailman but the heroes of both cities stopped him from re-creating both cities in his own image.

After Zero Hour, Supes found a boyhood rival had grown up to become a superpowered sociopath. Braverman attempted to kill Clark but Superman intervened. A body was found in Superman's tomb, and after a rampage, Superman found that Brainiac had hypnotized the entire world into believing that it existed. The illusion ended when Superman defeated Brainiac.

Titans Family

The former Team Titans were found to be pawns belonging to Monarch/Extant, activated during Zero Hour. The restructuring of time eliminated them, except Terra and Mirage. Arsenal started up a team with Damage, Impulse, Darkstar Donna Troy, Green Lantern, Mirage and Terra. Changeling fell under Raven's thrall and turned against the Titans.

Warrior

Guy Gardner traveled to Oa with

several others where they met and fought Hal Jordan. Guy, who'd been using a yellow power ring, lost the ring to Jordan.

After a lengthy hospital stay, Guy left for the Nabba-Nabba jungle to find the "Warrior Waters." He found them and learned that he was one of a shape-changing warrior race known as the last Vuldarians. The keeper of the waters gave him temporary amnesia so he had time to cope with the truth. Guy traveled to the realm of Dementor (a mutant Vuldarian responsible for Guy's coma personality changes) and freed his brother and an old friend. Guy traveled to Washington, D.C., saved the president's life and was acclaimed a national hero. Major Force attempted to kill Guy's mother, but stuffed a housesitter into a refrigerator instead. Together with the current Green Lantern, Guy confronted Major Force.

Wonder Woman

Paradise Island returned from a time warp. Hippolyta declared a new competition for the title of Wonder Woman. Wonder Woman learned that her mother lied about what happened when Hercules enslaved the Amazons, and that Hercules may be Diana's father. Diana lost the competition to Artemis, who came to Man's World as Wonder Woman. Diana returned with a new costume.

Zero Hour

Various parties (Monarch/Extant, Hal Jordan/Paralax) tried to manipulate time for their own purposes. Through a bizarre series of events, time was restored to a "natural order."

Shrapnel from this included the original Hourman, Atom and Dr. Mid-Nite dying; the second Atom (Ray Palmer) being turned into a young man; Triumph returning from the void and Hal Jordan being killed.

Events that share a marginal connection to Zero Hour: the introduction of a new Fate (minus the "Dr."), a new Starman (son of the original, brother of the near-latest), a new Manhunter (no relation) and Dr. Mist (formerly of the Global Guardians) forming a new group of "Leymen," now known as



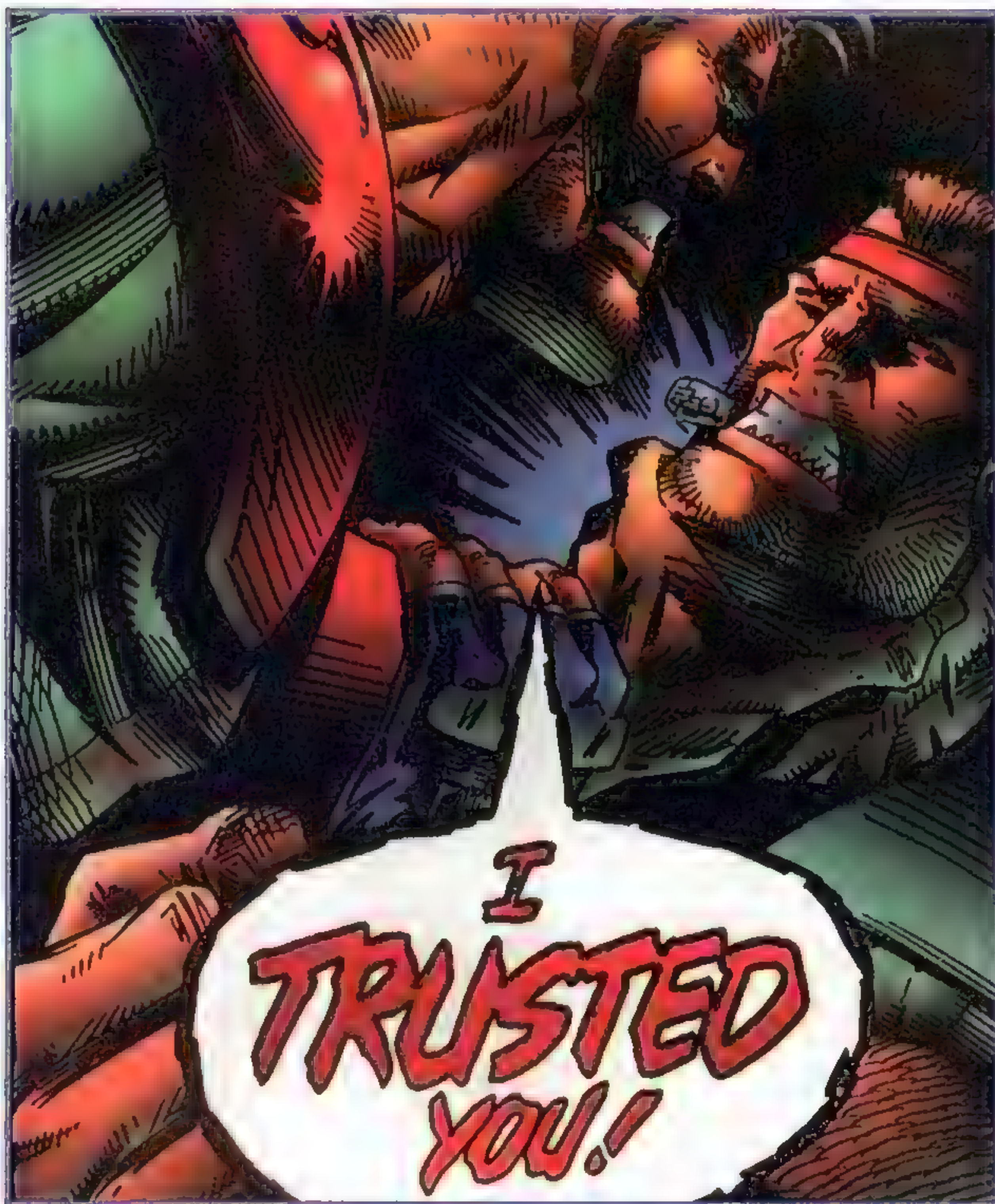
The Primal Force.

Image Extreme Family

Cabbot and Battlestone's father, Quantum, escaped from prison. Bloodstrike, Brigade, Team Youngblood, the Newmen and Supreme tried to stop him. Quantum killed several and took away Supreme's powers, who then had to rely on Thor's hammer. Cabbot sacrificed himself to stop Quantum.

Bloodstrike became a singular person instead of a team and was brought in to stop a rogue Prophet. They critically wounded each other but were captured and healed by Darkthorn's disciple Wargame. Crypt appeared and killed Wargame, and

Romance!



attempted to kill Prophet, but the two escaped.

Troll teamed up with Julie Winters and the Maxx in the past to fight Jack the Ripper.

Supreme went mad after his nemesis tried to kill him in an attempt to give him back his powers. He fought Union, Spawn, Stormwatch and Pitt, and then regained his wits. He was then brought to Asgard to fight for the ownership of Thor's hammer.

After a run-in with the WildC.A.T.s in Japan, Brigade found Boone was a traitor. In a battle between him and Battlestone, both appeared to be killed, but actually Boone made away with a captured Stone. Battlestone was put through a government program that extracted his memories.

Youngblood was caught in a Cybernet trap, losing Combat in an explosion. He was believed captured

or dead, but was actually stolen by invading Katellians. A team was sent to find him and fought Cybernet again. Badrock had his vacation interrupted by Overkill. The other team fought the Four, which now included Brahma, formerly of Youngblood. Riptide was "black-mailed" into posing nude for *Pussycat Magazine* and was told she'd be cut from the team after their mission against the Newmen. They brought them in on murder charges, but the government offered Newmen sponsorship. Dash went into labor.

Highbrow Family

Freak Force learned that Mighty Man was nurse Samantha Stevens. Chelsea Nirvana took the receptionist's position with Freak Force. She

and Mr. Steel plotted against the team. The Galactic Cops devastated Manhattan. The Freak Force drove them off when Horridus knocked out their life support.

Officer Dragon recovered from his battle with Overlord. It was revealed that Dragon's friend Frank had not been killed by Overlord, but was actually a robot loaned to the Dragon by Vanguard. Skullface tracked the real Frank Darling down, who killed him. Dragon was possessed by a leech and decimated the Chicago police force before Mace stopped him.

Maxx

Maxx fought Pitt in and out of the real world and into the Outback, both actual size and much smaller. Mr. Gone explained some secrets behind Maxx and Julie Winters, and Julie left the Maxx, leaving him very upset.

Pitt

Pitt fought Zoyvod, who had kidnapped his friend Timmy. Pitt freed the boy, whose powers then manifested. He destroyed Zoyvod's material body. Timmy then went comatose and was brought to the hospital. Timmy and Grandpa were kidnapped. Pitt and several others traveled to a secret iceberg base, where he was set upon by Creed warriors. He dispatched them, which was noticed by his brother.

ShadowHawk

ShadowHawk began a gambit to discover a way to stop his illness. Along the way he ran into Chapel, WildC.A.T.s, the 1963 heroes and the Others, but found no permanent respite.

Spawn Family

Demonic forces decided to test the effects of nuclear power on Spawn. They enlisted Harry Houdini, tried to lure Spawn into their trap and failed.

The Violator was trapped between the Admonisher and the Phlebiac Brothers. Violator convinced Spawn to turn over his power. He sent his enemies running and beat Spawn severely. Meanwhile, Angela was brought up on charges.

Top Cow Family

Stryke Force and Stormwatch repelled shape-changing aliens. Bloodbow was killed in the battle by one of them, who began posing as him.



Frank Granger convinced Ballistic to help lead Stryker into a trap, which led to Stryker's capture by Mindgame. Cyberforce rescued Stryker. Granger died, but left behind evidence that he was Ballistic's father and that their mother may not be Mother May I. Chip and the Huntsman's companion, Miranda Tai, were injured in a battle involving a new private security force.

Wildstorm Family

After an encounter with Lord Entropy, the WildC.A.T.s were confronted by the Raksha. One infected Zealot and another possessed Voodoo, trapping the C.A.T.s in a plan laid by Tapestry, a sorceress somehow bound to Zealot. Zealot tapped into a dark power to free her friends.

The Black Razor unit fought the WildC.A.T.s to stop a shape-changing Daemonite who'd infiltrated the team. The WildC.A.T.s wondered what happened to their teammate Maul.

StormWatch fought a mindless purple giant with a bomb strapped to it. They stopped it, but Battallion died.

Ivana reopened I/O's study of superpowered beings. Several of her

subjects discovered that they were being manipulated. John Lynch helped them escape, at the cost of his standing in I/O.

Former Team 7 member Michael Cray found himself protecting the Miracle Child against the Dark Angel. Ex-teammates Grifter, Dane and Backlash helped him fight the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

The Wetworks team merged with a group of golden symbiotes and broke away from I/O. They fought the vampire clan and halted a Daemonite merger with vampire Prince Drakken.

The half-angel, half-human hybrid Hellshock stopped his angelic father from dragging his mother into hell with him.

Malibu

Firearm

Firearm talked an ultra-female out of jumping off a roof. Later, he was hired to track down Prime and ran into sasquatch in Canada. Alec Swan then entered cyberspace

where he lost an arm and died. Rafferty began killing ultras and Swan was put on the case of stopping him. While Firearm was distracted fighting Rafferty's men, Rafferty killed Warstrike.

Hardcase

Hardcase and Choice returned from the moon and learned Choice was given bits of Forsa and Starburst's brains. Choice then disappeared. Rex Mundi sent N-ME to kill Hardcase. Prime comes to his aid. The Alternate heals Hardcase. He destroys N-ME and is then whisked away.

Mantra

Mantra teamed up with Prime against his creator, then lost much of her power when Boneyard and his wives stole her armor. She succeeded in getting it back but was tricked into killing Archmage.

Prime

Disillusioned by lies from his father and the government, Prime becomes Rogue Prime. He later takes on a more heroic form and a partner.

Scandal!

Rune

Rune stole the power of an artificially created god and found he couldn't control it.

Sludge

Sludge saved reporter Shelley Rogers from an alligator man in the sewers, became nearly human for a short time, explained his story to Rogers, who investigated further and found a possible link to Doc Gross. Sludge then reverted back to his old form, was controlled by a witch and fought Prime.

Ultraforce

Prime and Hardcase created a team to police ultras and fought Atalon, who'd stolen America's nukes. Prime quit but then came back. Atalon learned that Ghoul talks to the dead, captured him and set off a nuke.

Marvel Avengers

Proctor was revealed as an alternate-dimension version of Dane Whitman, the Black Knight. Proctor pushed Sersi closer and closer to the madness that had claimed his world and many others. The final battle between Proctor and the Gatherers broke down the walls between dimensions, afterward leaving a new Avengers Mansion. The madness forced Sersi to take refuge in an alternate dimension with the Black Knight. Quicksilver and Crystal returned to Wundagore, where they were caught in a battle between Exodus and the High Evolutionary.

Captain America

The Super-Soldier formula in Captain America's body exceeded its limits, forcing Cap to consider

retirement. After a battle with the Serpent Society, he found himself paralyzed. Diamondback promised to serve Superia to atone for the murder of Snapdragon and to acquire a cure for Captain America.

Daredevil

Matt Murdock (Daredevil) took advantage of circumstances and staged his own death, taking the new alter ego of Jack Batlin. Elektra was rejected by the Chaste and Daredevil. Daredevil and Captain America fought the computer terrorism of Hydra. The King sacrificed an underling to bring the Devourer to Earth to hunt DD. Bushwhacker was hired to kill Daredevil. Deathlok the Demolisher and Blackwulf showed up. The King fell and an underground urchin returned to his vigilante role as the Peacekeeper. Wilson Fisk began his comeback.

Dr. Strange

The parts of Dr. Strange, Dr. Stevens and Strange tried to find hosts to merge with to stop their disincorporation, while trying to kill each other. Dr. Strange spent time in his other dimensional "forge" re-creating magick and himself, gearing up for a final battle with Salome.

Fantastic Four Family

A Watcher brought the Fantastic Four to an alternate dimension, where he claimed mankind reverted to savagery after the FF lost their first battle with Galactus. Sue, Johnny and Ben relived that fight, lost again and were returned to their dimension. They were attacked by the Dark Rider, the Reed Richards of the dimension the FF just left, who was killed by the Watcher who had sent the FF on their doomed mission. The FF disbanded.

The "baby" of Johnny and Lyja was defeated after it turned out to be an implant from the Skrulls, designed to kill them. Johnny told Lyja he never wanted to see her again, and she began stalking him. Ben settled his grudge with Wolverine.

Reed Richards of an undisclosed reality plotted alongside a Watcher,

revealing that the earlier Galactus story was a lie.

Sue traveled to Latveria and found Nathaniel Richards, who recruited her to help find his son, which brought them to Kristoff.

Franklin Richards formed the Fantastic Force after the Fantastic



Four disbanded.

Ghost Rider Family

Vengeance acted as Ghost Rider. Then Ghost Rider returned, darker and less powerful. Blaze's family was killed during a battle with Hellgate. Blaze blamed Ghost Rider and set off on his own. Vengeance was trapped midtransformation and experimented upon by Hellgate. Ghost Rider freed him and he left town to track down Hellgate. Blackout returned and began terrorizing Ghost Rider from behind the scenes. Dan started having problems coping with being Ghost Rider but kept getting into situations where he had to change. Dan's ex-girlfriend joined a police force where she received S.H.I.E.L.D. training to stop Ghost Rider.

Guardians Of The Galaxy

Mephisto removed the spell that protects Vance's body from the ravages of time. He began to age, but the shirt the Beyonder gave him formed a containment suit around him. Hollywood left on a quest to find Doctor Doom. The Guardians fought Mephisto and Malevolence. Aleta and Stakar traveled to the 20th century where they rerouted history by destroying Yondu's dagger before the Badoon could acquire it. The Beyonder and Protege stood under judgment of a Celestial, the Living Tribunal and the Hawk God. Overkill baited Hollywood into a trap using nasal implants created by Doctor Doom. Wonder Man killed him. Talon whisked the Guardians away from Mephisto and Malevolence using the shards of the soul gem. They appeared in the presence of the tribunal gathered to judge Protege and the Beyonder. Protege gained immeasurable power and took on everyone. The Hawk God made Stakar into Starhawk and told him that the people he originally thought were his parents were actually preparing him for a meal. The Living Tribunal drew on the power of the soul gem shards and placed Protege in a large hourglass. Captain-27 was captured and accused of being Ripjak, the interplanetary serial killer. Vance tried to move the mask off his mouth to kiss Aleta but it stuck to her face. Talon used a molecular device to fix his back, which gave him a new appear-

ance and bestial temperament.

In an attempt to free Captain-27, the Irish Wolfhound was drawn into a battle with Drax the Destroyer. Captain-27 was soon cleared of charges and the Guardians took over the investigation of Ripjak. They traveled to Mars. Yondu was troubled by the news that his god Anthos might actually be Thanos. Ripjak ambushed the Guardians. They read Ripjak's diary and learned that in the final days of the Martian plague, he used Spider-Man's radioactive blood to survive. Meanwhile, Ripjak destroyed a planet. Ripjak revealed that he only destroys planets that are about to be consumed by plague. He asked the Guardians to help him find Bubonicus, and the High Evolutionary appeared.



Incredible Hulk

The last year in the Hulk's life has seen space travel, the origins of the Pantheon, the bachelor party and wedding of Rick Jones, the death of longtime friend Jim Wilson and the fall of the Pantheon. During a fit of anger, the Hulk transformed into a mindless Bruce Banner.

Iron Man Family

Stane Enterprises' shady business deals came back to haunt Stark Enterprises and Tony restructured the company. Meanwhile, Iron Man gathered together several former Avengers West Coast members to form Force Works. Stark found his

Jealousy!

body possessed by a computer intelligence called VOR/TEX. His alcoholism resurfaced. James Rhodes became involved with the "Worldwatch" organization. When War Machine needed his armor repaired, he turned to Stark, and the two fought. They were abducted by the Mandarin, who planned to wipe out technology. Force Works came to the rescue. Rhodes revealed his identity as War Machine to Worldwatch.

New Warriors Family

The Warriors and X-Force fought the Gamemaster. The Sphinx then scattered the Warriors through time. A new team was formed and helped Sphinx and Sphynx find peace. Psionex tried to become a superhero team. Night Thrasher struggled with his ideas of good and evil. Nova prepared for the Deathstorm.

Silver Surfer

Posing as Nova, Mephisto got the Surfer to pledge his soul to him. The Surfer escaped.

Spider-Man Family

Spider-Man learned that the beings he thought were his parents were actually synthetic beings created by the Chameleon and suppressed his Peter Parker identity. Aunt May suffered a heart attack and entered a coma. Ben Reilly, Parker's clone, came to her side. Parker and Reilly were brought together when the Judas Traveler threatened Ravencroft Hospital. Parker was poisoned by the Vulture and the Owl, but Doc Ock saved him. Doc Ock was killed by Kaine, an assassin who has been following Parker and Reilly. Kaine suffers visions where he sees Mary Jane being murdered.

Mary Jane returned to her sister's home and made peace with both her sister and her father. She returned to New York and discovered she was pregnant. Peter

regained a positive attitude.

Reilly took on the identity of the "Scarlet Spider." He fought Venom and separated Brock from his symbiote. The Spider was then confronted by the Kaine, whom Reilly had faced before. The Grim Hunter interrupted and Kaine killed him.

Reilly and Parker felt themselves summoned to the lair of the Jackal, who returned in another cloned form. He claimed the real Parker was still in his custody.

X-Men Family

Scott Summers and Jean Grey were married. They spent a 12-year honeymoon psychically yanked into the future, fighting Apocalypse, raising Nathan and learning the origin of the Legacy Virus. Meanwhile, Madrox died. Mystique was revealed to be Nightcrawler's mother. The late Doug Ramsey returned as Douglock. Douglock was an unexpected renegade of the Phalanx, a group of humans who had assumed techno-organic form to destroy mutants. The Phalanx captured the X-Men, forcing the splinter teams to tackle the enemy while Cyclops, Phoenix, Cable and Wolverine staged a rescue. The Phalanx also captured a group of new mutants, which inspired Xavier to create Generation X, a team led by Banshee and the former White Queen. Wolverine recovered and returned to the X-Mansion. X-Force lost its computer, Prosh, when an encounter with the Phalanx gave it a body of its own, leading it to explore the galaxy. They found that Roberto DaCosta had become their enemy, Reignfire. Meanwhile, Legion emerged from his catatonia and went back in time to kill Magneto. Instead, Legion killed Xavier himself, which completely nullified time.



Milestone Blood Syndicate

Fade saved his father from a Bang Baby who could change himself into a T-Rex. Then Boogieman's friendship with the rats embroiled the group into the war between the rats and the roaches and killed the leader of the roaches, the White Roach. The group wandered over into Metropolis and clashed with Superman. Meanwhile, Mom was busy fortifying her agents for a new onslaught on the Bang Babies. Masquerade finally cracked and stole all the money the group made off a crackhouse hit, only to get captured by Mom's agents. Kwai was shot during the hit, forcing her to wrap herself in a healing cocoon.

Hardware

Curtis Metcalf and Barraki Young's relationship coalesced, but Curtis made friends with longtime enemy and employer Edward Alva. Curtis re-created the Hardware armor and placing Hardware, and not just Curtis, in the employ of Alva. Curtis' shame of this fact forces him to consistently dodge Barraki.

During the Worlds Collide crisis, Hardware worked closely with Steel to

find a way to destroy Rift. However, it was taken out of their hands. Curtis finally fixed Icon's "radio," which led to Icon's people returning for him, mistaking Hardware for Icon. Hardware also faced magic for the first time and found the experience ultimately discouraging.

Icon

Icon and Rocket met Buck Wild, a powerful mercenary whose brain was frozen during experiments that gave him his powers, which left him as the definitive "embarrassing '70s archetype." Not long after having to fight Superman for humanitarian reasons, Icon's people returned for him. After cleaning up loose ends (such as revealing the truth behind the Big Bang, taking those responsible and having a talk with the father of Raquel's child), Icon broke the news to Raquel and left for home. Because of her increasing pregnancy, Raquel asks her sister to fill in as Rocket and after asking several people, she chooses Buck Wild to fill in as Icon.

Static

Bloods blackmailed Bang Baby D-Struct into trying to kill Static. He helped him find another way to get them off his back. He then had to deal with Dakota being destroyed, Dakota coming back, being a positive role model for young people and his personal life falling apart while supervillains attacked.

Xombi

During an attempt by Dr. Sugarman to steal technology, David Kim was transformed through nanotechnology into an unkillable being. From there, he met up with characters such as the Nun of Above, Catholic Girl and several others, and helped save the world from Dr. Sugarman.

Valiant

Eternal Warrior

EW didn't make it to Ladakh, the center of Chaos, in time to save Geoff. He picks Geoff's uncle Clay to succeed Geoff as Geomancer and Clay promptly fires him as the "fist and steel of the Earth." Now EW's busting up crackhouses and fighting gangsters in New York City.

Harbinger

The Harbinger kids saved Harada from a HARD Corps assassination attempt and saved themselves from Dr. Eclipse. Zeppelin learned Harada wants to conquer the world and she's supposed to stop him. After waking from a coma, Harada possessed HARD Corps member Flatline to fight the Spider Aliens in space. He has since made publicly smearing the Visitor's actions and encouraging violence in his protege, "the" Harbinger, his main priorities.

Magnus Robot Fighter

Magnus ended the Malev War by killing his best friend Rai and was elected president of the world. After the war, he married Leeja and had a son named Torque. He had all the robots destroyed, so he had to come back in time to stop Chaos for a little excitement. He never found his mom but he avenged his father's death, then came back in time to be possessed by the Immortal Enemy and get beaten up by Torque.

Rai

Rai died fighting the Malevs, but his son, Rai, grew up and gained power after taking a little of his dad's blood. His adopted brother, the son of a different dead Rai, wanted to be Rai but his mom wouldn't let him. So he killed her and took her armor so he could beat up his brother. Then Rai's girlfriend left him because she thought he had killed her brother, but Rai's adopted brother was the murderer.

Shadowman

Shadowman Jack Boniface learned more about his powers from housekeeper and voodoo priestess Nettie when Chaos supercharged him. He survived getting stabbed through the heart, attacked by a few hundred zombies and sucked into the Night Monster. Max, the first Shadowman, woke up from a coma and sucked Master Darque into his Shadow symbol. Jack helped change Nettie from the babe she had turned into during Chaos to the fossil she was before it. While he was at it, he saved an island full of voodoo practitioners from drug smugglers.

Solar

Solar's violent side made it into



deep space early in the year to destroy the Spider Aliens. The Destroyer sent back a portion of his energy with Magnus to help Solar end Chaos.

X-O Manowar

The Spider Aliens killed Aric's first X-O armor, but Solar went to Saturn and got him a new one. Tension rose between Aric and his girlfriend Randy Cartier when he let her best friend Paul die to become the new armor's host. Randy had to forgive him when he helped her stop her old enemy's daughter from killing the rest of her friends and making Earth glow in the dark.

(Tune in tomorrow...) ▲



MEANWHILE

By Frank Kurtz

1994

THE BEST OF ALL THE REST



For a lot of fans of comics, science fiction and horror, the material that came out last year was either the motherlode or your worst nightmare (as you watched every penny fly out of your wallets). There was no way you could get everything (unless you were a millionaire or somebody sent it to you gratis). Here are a few of our favorites that even we didn't get every bit of.



line out on time and everywhere. Not only did most of the figures look great (only the Violator was a disappointment), but also they were selling out on both coasts. In the Midwest the figures were, and still are, in abundance.

Toy Biz exploded again with a ton of X-Men and two new lines: Spider-Man and the late release of Fantastic Four. The X-Men seemed to be waning by year's end, with tons of figures just sitting on store shelves. Still, they finally produced a

Rogue figure (which we never found) and a great Beast figure. On the good side, their Spider-Man line could really kick in with the regular TV series. The Fantastic Four line was incredible, though. The Thing and Terrax in particular stand out as two of the best figures ever created.

Playmates continued to burn up store shelves with their various Star Trek lines, the Turtles (still going) and the excellent Exo Squad. On the other hand, while quality was high, lines like seaQuest DSV and Coneheads sat on the shelves (except that darned Darwin the dolphin figure).

The one word to describe Kenner this year was Batman. It seems like no matter how many of these things they put out, there were people dying to get them. One wonders when this

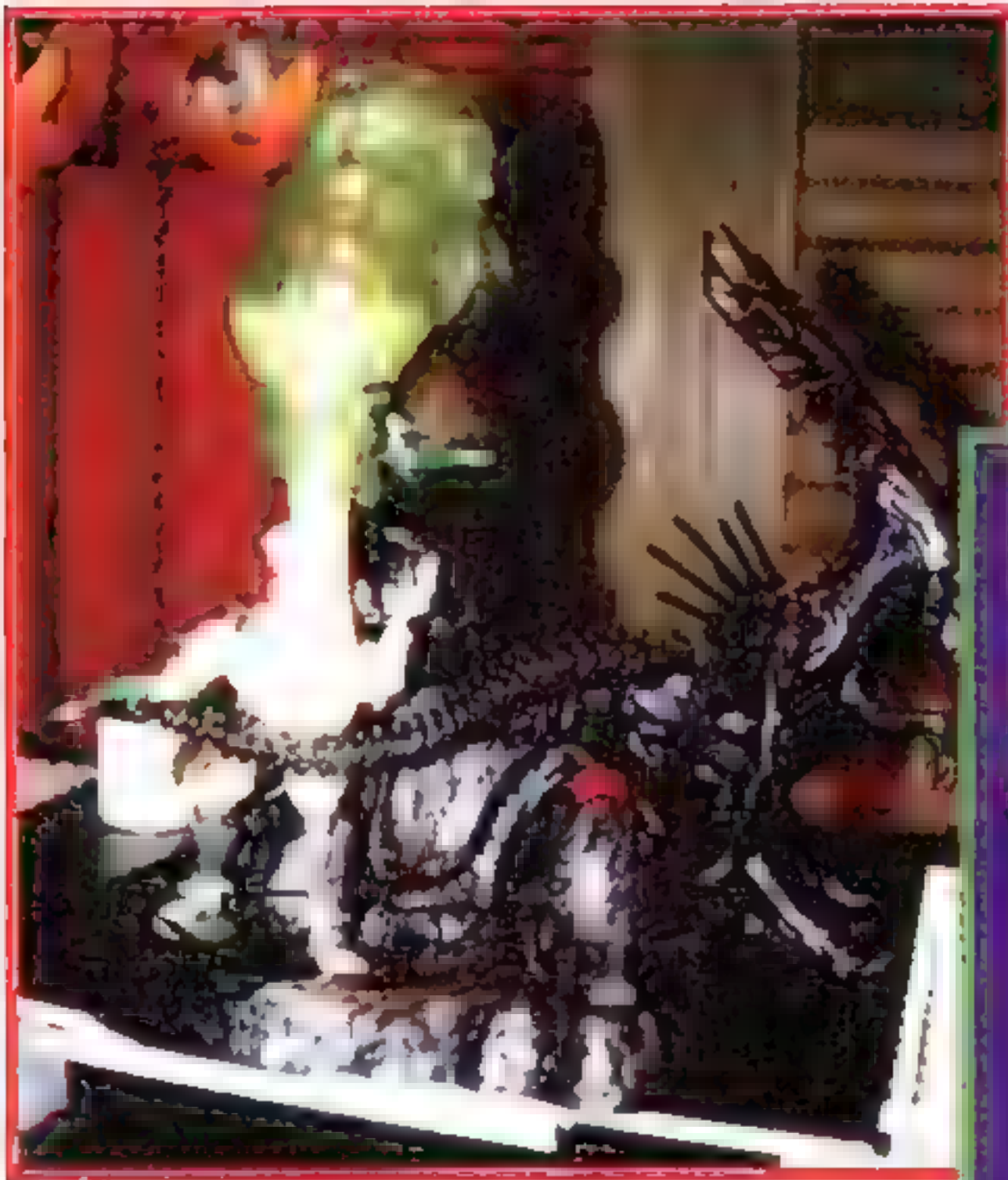
ACTION FIGURES

1994 was the year of the action figure. For every line of figures that succeeded, there must have been 10 more that didn't.

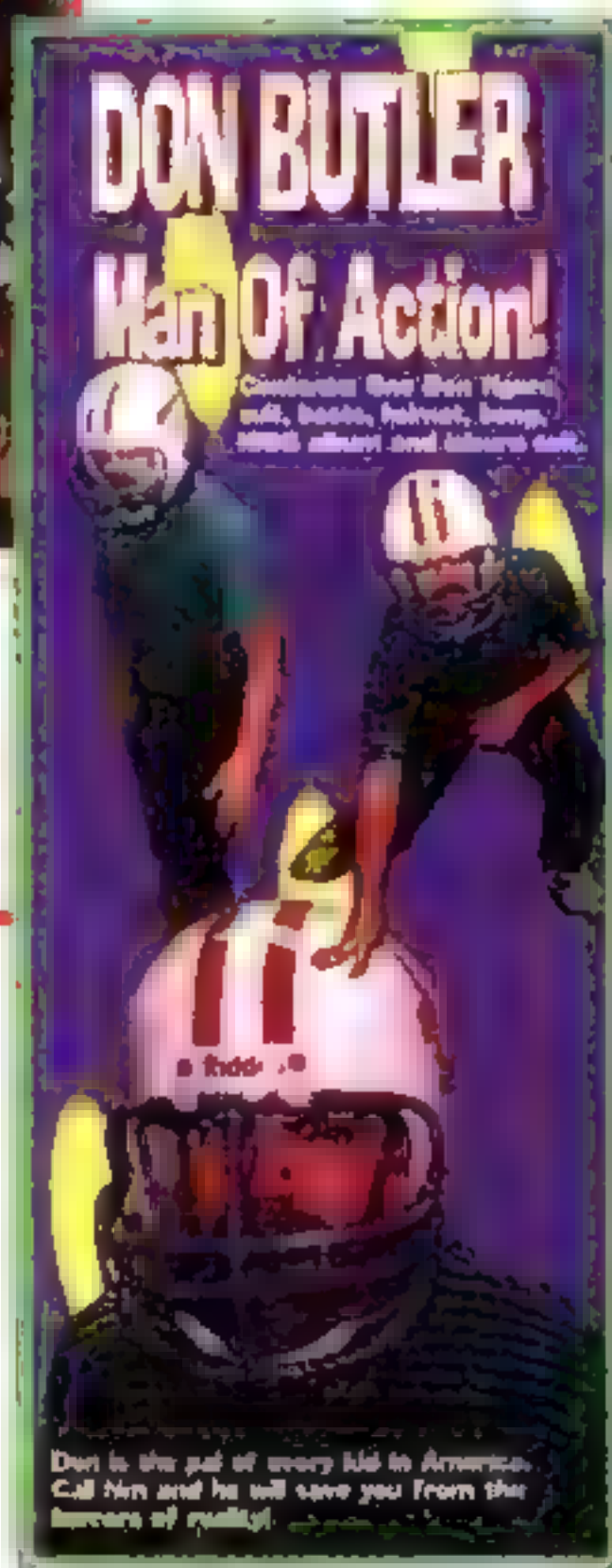
The big winners of the year included:

Fledgling toy manufacturer Todd McFarlane proved everybody wrong when he got his Todd Toys' Spawn





year) appeared to be a vanity item from a mysterious Zok Toys. Very few of these things exist—and after looking at it, we can see why. If anyone has any information about who and why the “Don Butler, Man Of Action” doll exists, please send us a line. We’re dying to know the truth about this truly oddball item.



MODEL KITS & FIGURES

Not only was 1994 good for action figure collectors, but there were a ton of figure model kits as well. Here are a few of those that caught our eye over the

last year.

We know that Dark Horse head honcho Mike Richardson loves model kits, so it's not surprising that the company has jumped into the model kit world in a big way. Our hands-down favorite of all the Dark Horse kits was their spectacular Creature from the Black Lagoon kit. Word has it that the kit was so in demand that Dark

Horse sent it out before the box was printed (to be followed up later). This dynamic figure gives Taishiro Kiya's excellent Creature kit from Horizon a run for its money.

Dark Horse's Madman figure sculpted by Randy Bowen was too cool to pass up. We know Mike Allred was happy about it, because almost every show we saw him at, he was carrying the thing around like it was an

Oscar. It's not really a kit so much as a pre-painted figure, but it's great.

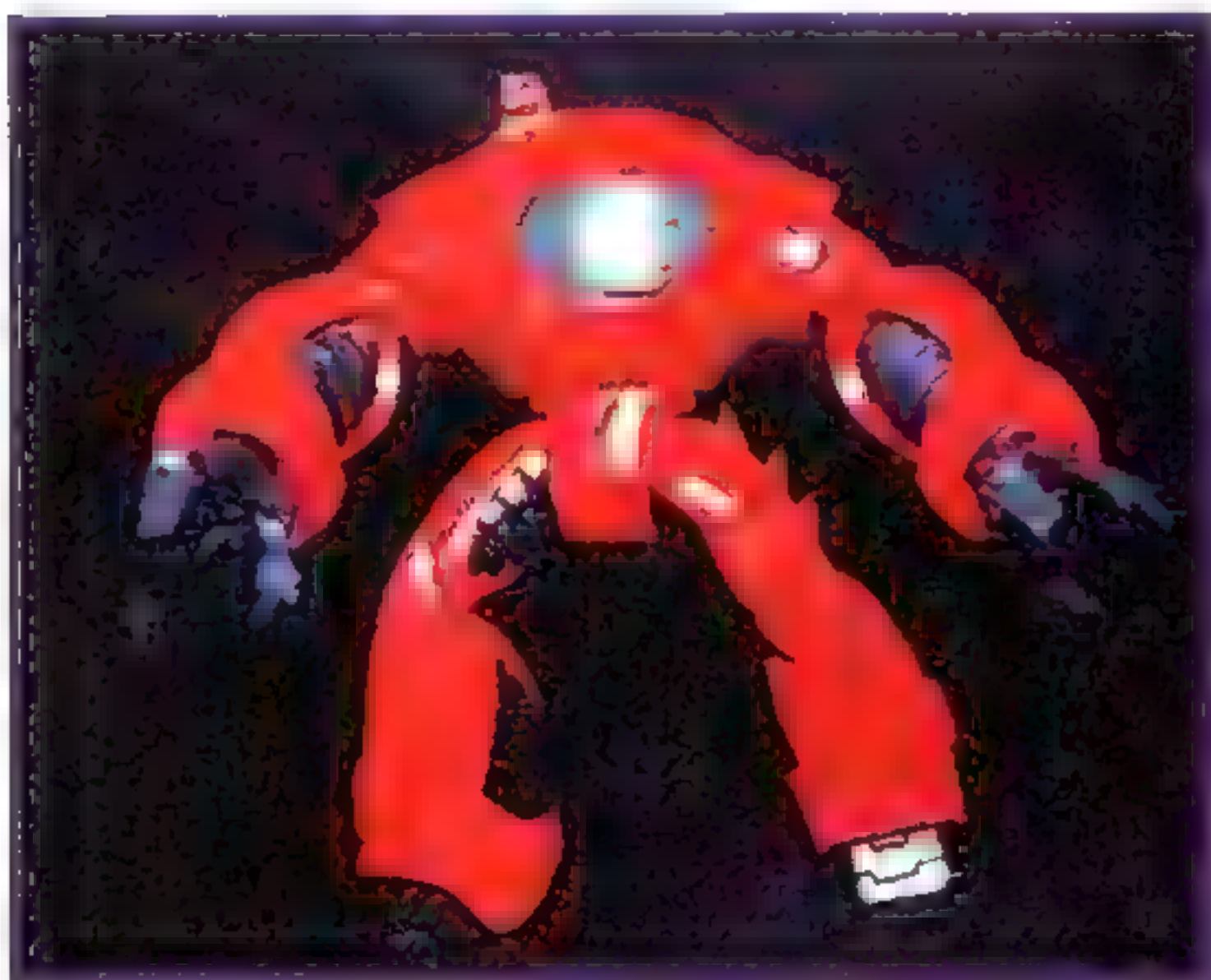
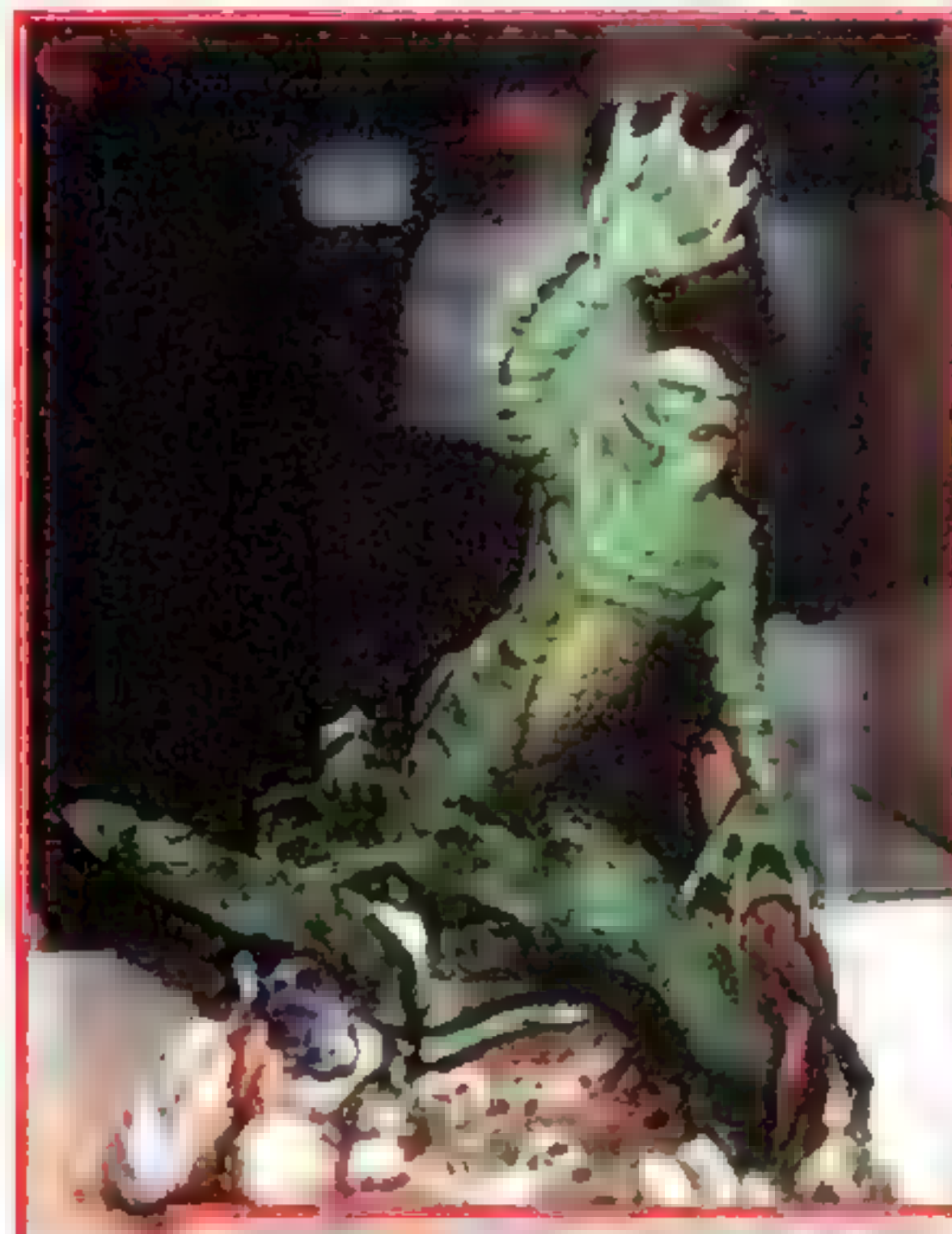
Other favorites we saw from Dark Horse included their Mummy figure kit and the Bone statue.

The folks at Horizon weren't sitting on their hands this past year. Two of our favorite kits included a spectacular Green Goblin kit



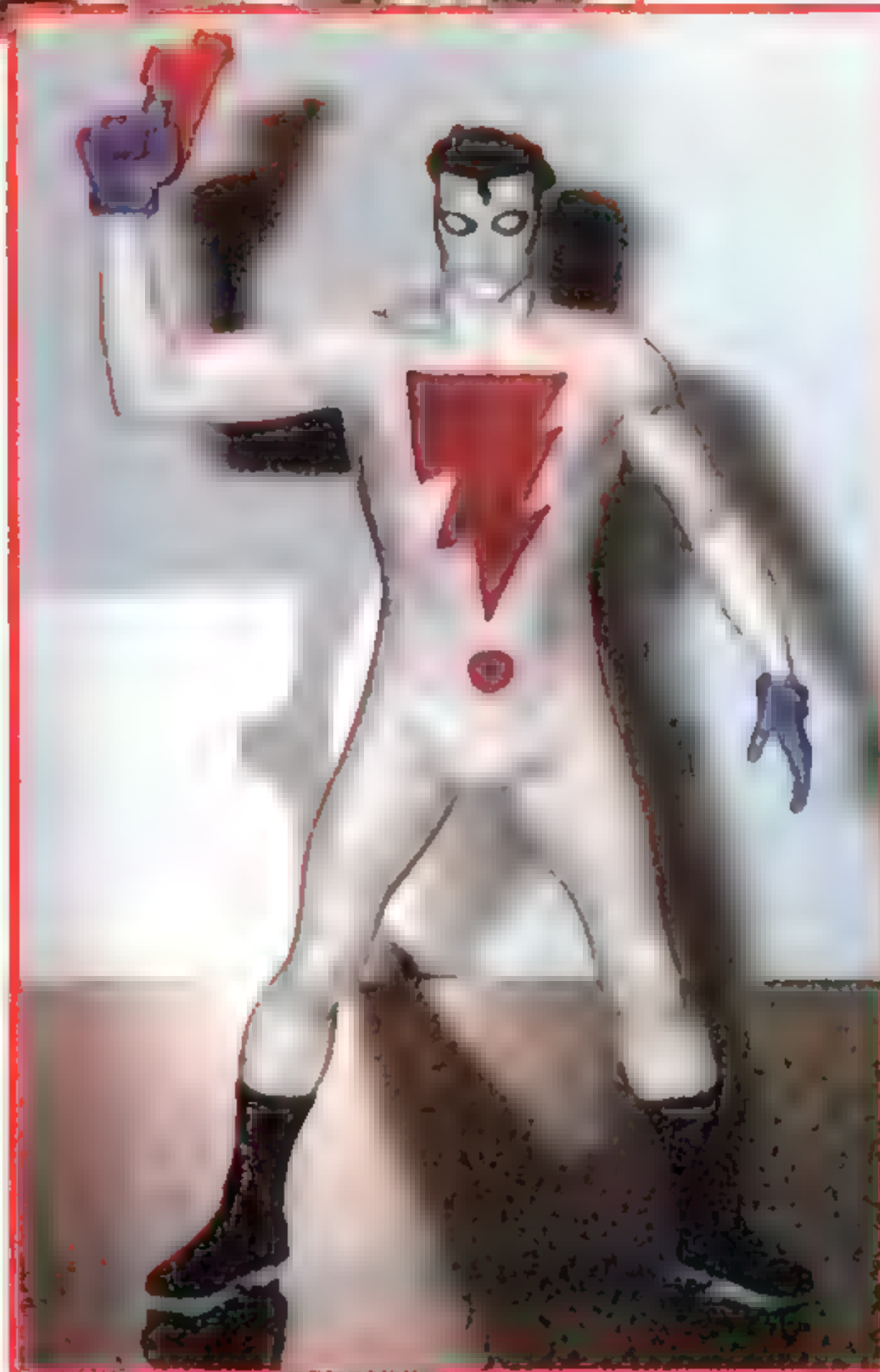
(including the Goblin's flying bat). Not

only was the kit easy to build, but it also goes perfectly with their second Spider-Man kit (this time Spidey is in a dramatic pose, ready to do battle.



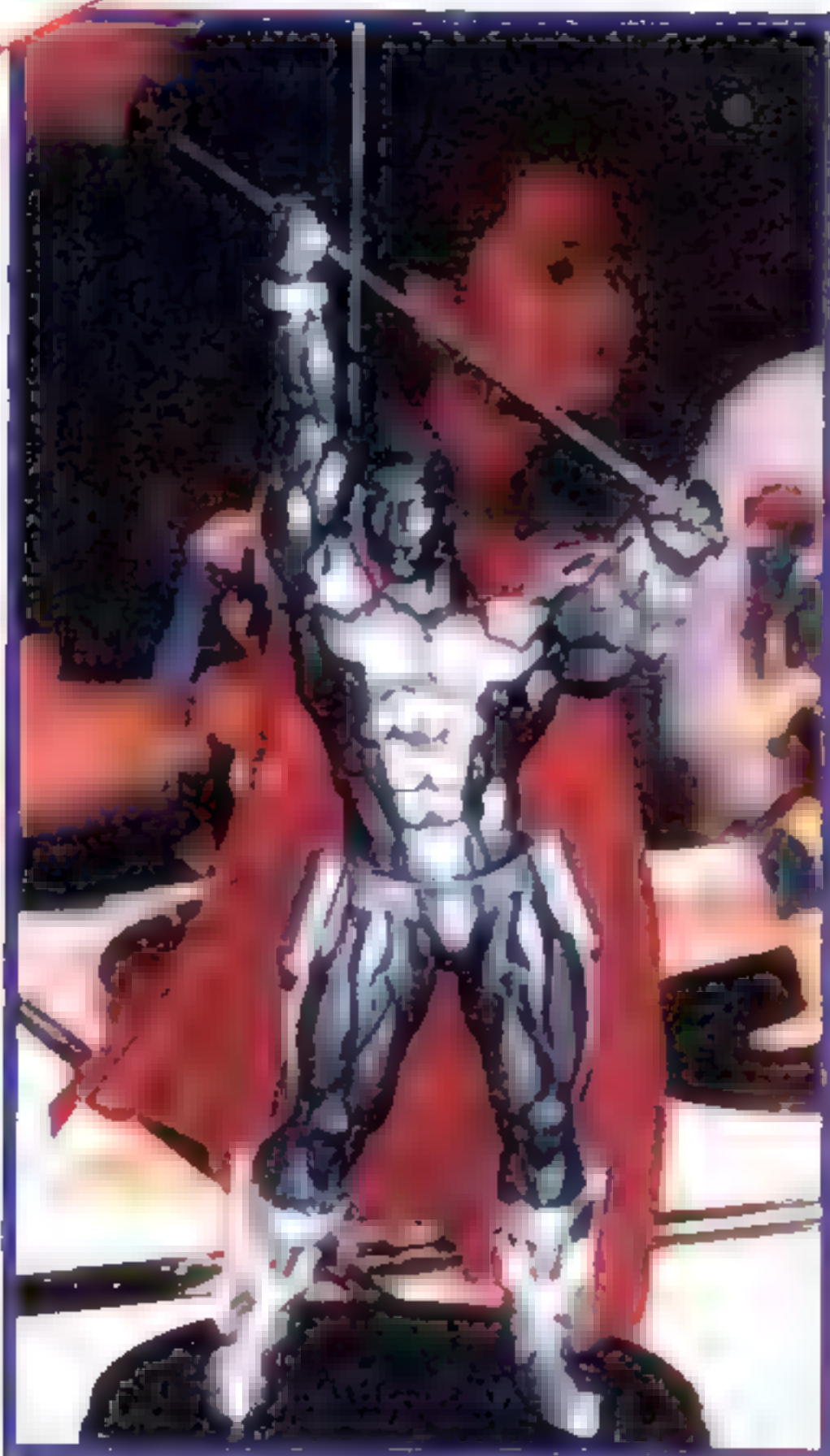
the packages of those lucky enough to have them, considering the very low amounts of each that were produced. The fine work that went into the figures has not gone unnoticed in the world of toys. Keep an eye on this column in the months ahead for big news.

Probably the weirdest toy that came out in 1994 (or any other peacetime



THE ANNUAL

1994



Of their DC figure kits, our favorite just has to be their amazing Steel figure. This dynamic figure captures the essence of the iron-clad hero with a sledgehammer. We can't recommend this one enough.

Screamin' continued to keep up a high level of quality and produce some truly unique kits this year. Among their larger-than-normal-size figures, one that stood out (no pun intended) was the incredible Crypt-Keeper kit. This huge figure shows the chuckling old creep in all his glory, with his usual rotting smile.

Over in their line of *Star Wars*



kits, one of the best was the much-anticipated Boba Fett kit. This great-looking kit is to scale with all the others and I would imagine did better than a few of the others. C'mon, everyone loves Boba Fett!

Graphitti's not in the model kit biz, but they've been creating high-quality statues for many moons. Our absolute favorite has been their Ghoul-Lunatics statues (designed by William Stout) that perfectly capture that bygone era when kids could sit back and enjoy grisly comics with the world's most hideous puns.

1994 also turned into a banner year for home-grown garage kits. For the



uninitiated, the garage kit phenomenon came about by fans who just had to have figures of their favorite SF, horror, anime or whatever characters, but knew there was no chance that a large company would even consider them. Producers create these kits for the love of them and rarely see any money. Many of these kits are created without licensing. (And in such low



numbers most wouldn't bother to explore that option.)

As the garage kit market grew, there were some folks who took it very seriously and decided to pursue real licensing.

One such kit was Action Kits' great-looking Barnabas Collins figure kit. It looks just like Jonathan Frid and is fully licensed. Action Kit has also produced a Ben Cross version of Barnabas and an unbelievably great-looking Toxic Avenger kit.

Finally, the absolute best toy book of the year was the self-published *Toy*



Bop by Tom Frey. Make no mistake, this incredibly slick book does not look cheap. It's filled to the brim with tons of full-color photos of some of the greatest toys ever created. By all means, get this book!

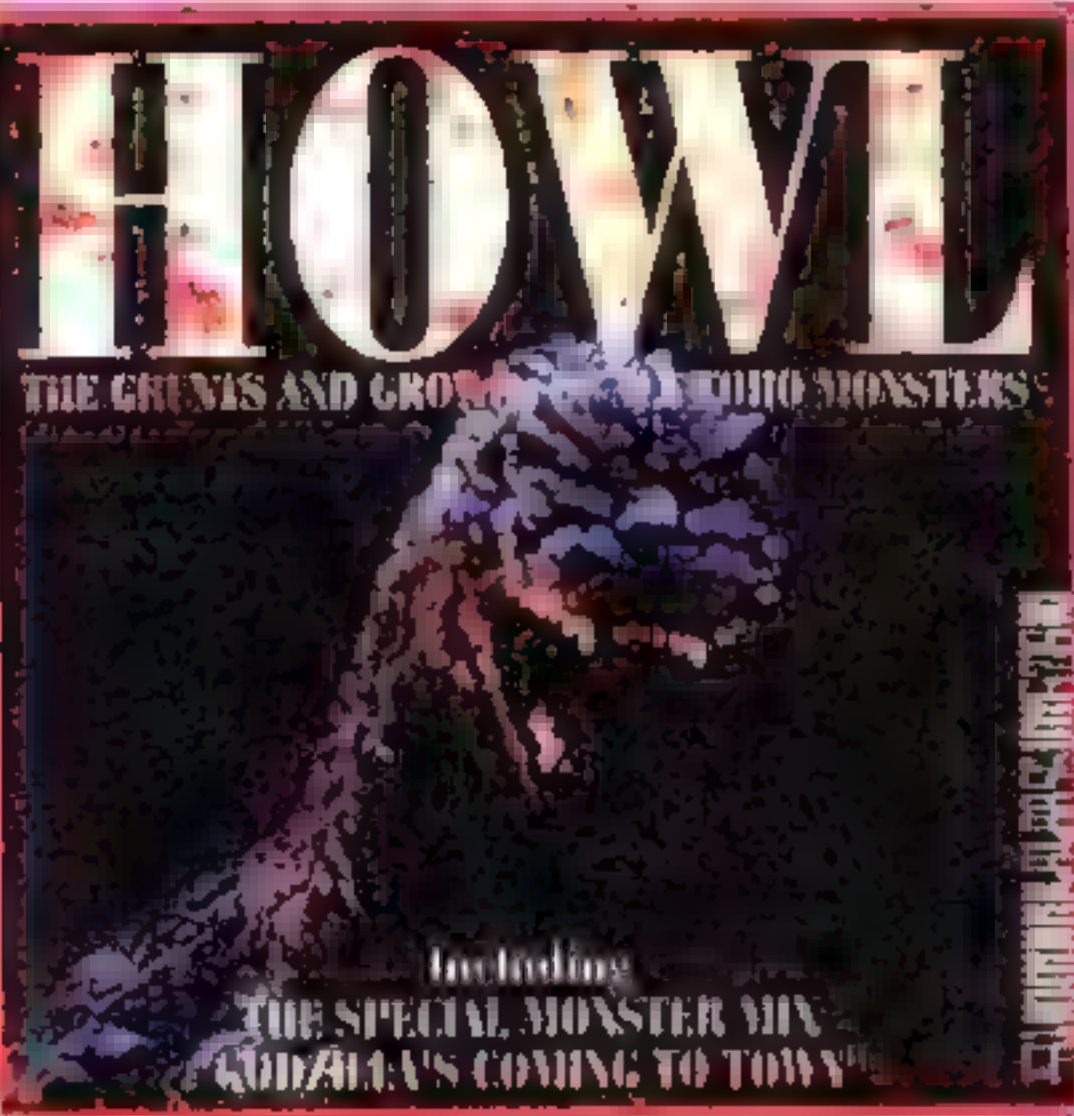
As for the best of 1995... well, stay tuned ...

Wish They Had Been Here

Over the last year, we covered a ton of stuff in both Go Figure and Meanwhile. Unfortunately, certain things snuck past even our watchful eyes. So, here are a few of those things that are guaranteed more fun than a hard sock in the gut!



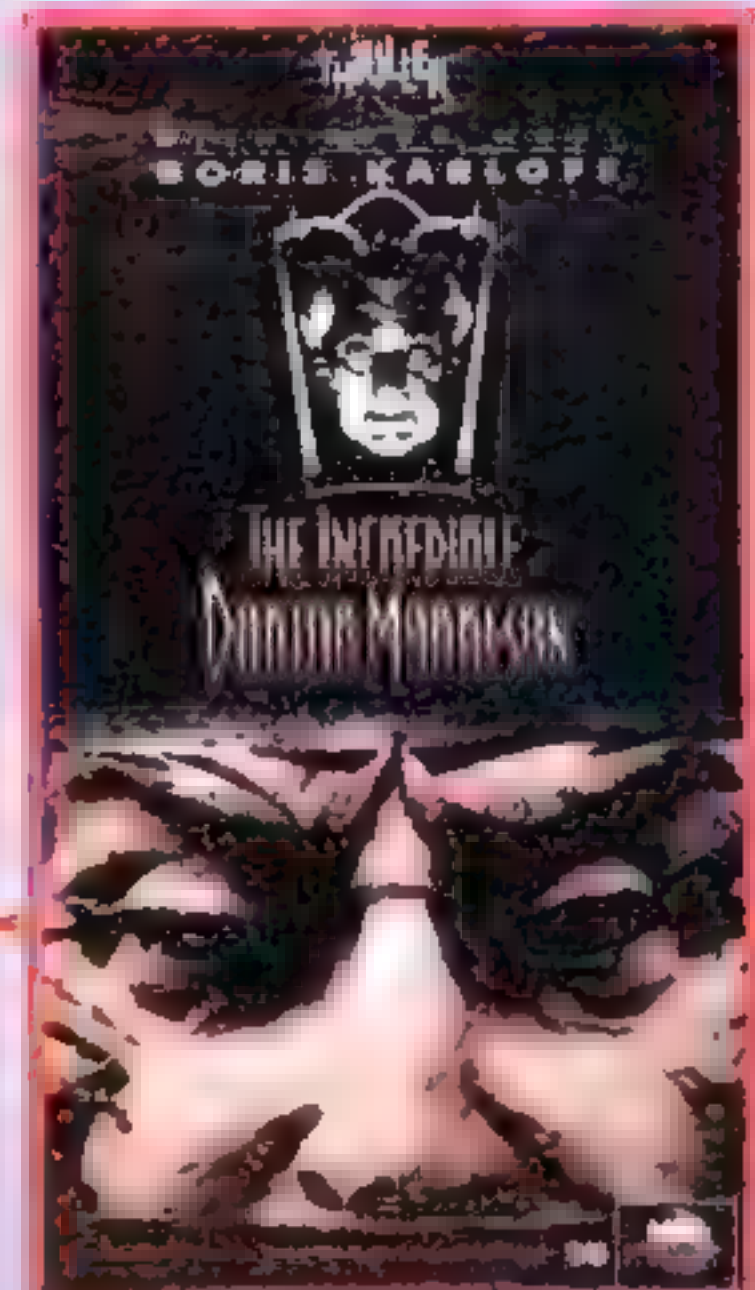
Here's our kind of fanzine. It's filled with enthusiasm with nary a mention of price or values. For fans of old Marx playsets (and many more) from the '40s to the '70s, send a line to: Plastic Figure and Playset Collector c/o Specialty Publishing Co., P.O. Box 1355, La Crosse, WI 54602-1355.



It exists! Godzilla fans have always wondered if a record existed filled with Toho monster sound effects. You name it, most of the yells, screams and howls of Toho giant monsterdom from *Gojira* (1954) to *G Vs. Mecha-G* (1994) are here!



Orion Home Video brought this SF classic to home video along with *Panic In Yera Zero*, *Mars Needs Women* and *Reptilicus*. While the others are questionable, this is one great film directed by Roger Corman. One warning: Tapes at \$14.95 are SP, tapes at \$9.95 are EP. Buyer beware!



Now that Universal's classic monster video series has just about run its course, it seems like a good time to release all-new prints of this classic TV horror starring the one and only Boris Karloff. Six episodes were released that are a nice cross section, including the classic episode pictured. When's the next batch?



We just had to show you this gorgeous kit of Medusa from the film *Clash of the Titans* created by Geometric Kits. Geometric has even more Ray Harryhausen kits that have us salivating already!



Criterion finally released a letterboxed LD of John Carpenter's classic horror film, *Halloween*. If you never saw it in the theater, you never really saw it. As usual, this disc is loaded with extra features that make spending \$100 more than reasonable.



THE PROS LOOK BACK!

FOR MORE THAN 50
ARTISTS, WRITERS,
PUBLISHERS AND
SELF-PUBLISHERS,
IT WAS A VERY
GOOD YEAR—
OR NOT...

WE ASKED THE PROS:

1. THE BEST THING
TO HAPPEN TO
COMICS IN 1994
2. THE *WORST*
THING TO HAPPEN TO
COMICS IN 1994
3. THE BEST THING TO
HAPPEN TO *YOU* IN 1994.
4. THE COMIC YOU'RE
REALLY GLAD YOU READ THIS
YEAR
5. HOPES/FEARS/PREDICTIONS
FOR 1995

WIREIMAGE

Mike Allred

writer/artist, *Madman Comics*:

1. The increasing success of creator-owned work.
2. The death of Jack Kirby.
3. The invitation to join the Legend group.
4. If I can only name one, I'll avoid the obvious and name *Palookaville*. This comic continues to charm me with each new issue. *Atomic City Tales* is nifty as well (oops, that's two).
5. I hope for the continued success and/or growth of the industry as a whole, especially creator-owned work, fear that won't happen, predict that it will. (That's it? You mean I don't get to continue the tradition of illustrating the annual cover? Wah!)

Donna Barr

writer/artist, *The Desert Peach, Stinz*:

1. *Bone* was nice. Oh, yes. And the Pro Con meeting at Wondercon when Marvel, realizing the boat was leaving the dock, jumped up and offered to fund the first year of the newsletter.
2. Jack Kirby died. Don Thompson died. Oh, hell ... Can I stop thinking about this one?
3. I made it through the convention year with plaudits and praise, and new books—and I didn't get sick a lot. Yay! (And I only spaced one panel!)
4. *Bone*. Jeff 'n' me swapped for *Stinz*. Mutual Fan Geeks in motion.
5. That I really *can* get my publishing company off the ground, pay the bills and keep getting the *Peach* and *Stinz* out in the market. And that I *can* get *The Ersatz Peach* (other peoples' view of my main character—Howard Cruse, Robert Gregory, Dave Sim, Lee Maars, Colleen Doran, Daniel Pinkwater—and anybody else I can talk into it!) all set and ready to go.

Kurt Busiek

writer, *Marvels, Jonny Demon, Valor, Strange Tales, Night Thrasher*:

1. The zombies died and died bloody. Every publisher in the business was hit by the realization that they couldn't just put indifferent stuff out and have it sell to *somebody*—they have to make it good, or nobody's going to want it. All of a sudden, the reader's experi-

ence—how he feels *after* reading the books—is at least as important as how much he *anticipates* reading them.

2. The market crashed along with the zombies, and if not for *Magic: The Gathering*, a lot of the retailers we've been counting on to help rebuild the industry around solid, readable, well-produced books would have been gone. Sure, we can make the books good again, but if we don't have retailers out on the front line getting our work in the hands of *readers*, it won't do much good.
3. Winning a pile of awards for *Marvels* sure didn't hurt...
4. *One Bad Rat* by Bryan Talbot.
5. *Hopes*: Pretty much the same as last year. I hope that publishers get behind creative-driven books that can capture the kind of loyalty that Mark Waid's *Flash*, Neil Gaiman's

Sandman and Peter David's *Hulk* have earned. I *fear* that we'll stumble across another flashy sales gimmick (acetate covers didn't work, so maybe hot trading cards with a comic wrapped around 'em?) and waste time chasing fast money instead of creating a solid foundation for rebuilding. I *predict* that either way, complacency is dead at all levels of the industry. The question is: Will it be replaced by long-term commitment or by desperation?



Mike Baron

writer *Nexus, Badger, Hard Corps*:

1. I have no idea.
2. Wholesale demise of various publishers—massive market contraction/realignment.
3. Return of *Nexus* © to Steve Rude and me.
4. *Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*.
5. Jim Shooter will surface with a new company called *Mad As Hell*. Azrael will bomb terrorist training camps in the Beliaa Valley. An unnamed terrorist group will bomb the Jim Lee Cloning Labs in the Utah Desert. Norm Breyfogle will illustrate a weapons manual for Bo Gritz.

John Byrne

writer/artist, *John Byrne's Next Men, Danger Unlimited, Babe, Aliens: Earth Angel, Action Comics Annual*:

1. The end of speculator boom, since it was a completely artificial aberration, and now, perhaps, we can expect the industry to "normalize."
2. The end of the speculator boom, since so many stores and companies treated it as if it were *not* an aberration and invested too much of their capital in it as if it would last forever.
3. I was invited to speak as part of a series of lectures on comic art at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.
4. *Mad Love*, the *Batman Adventures* Special issue by Paul Dini and Bruce Timm and the best *Batman* story I've read in 20 years (including my own).
5. *Hopes*: That we have seen the bottom. *Fears*: That we haven't.

Eddie Campbell

writer/artist, *From Hell, Hellblazer, The Dance of Life Death, Hermes vs. the Eyeball Kid*:

1. *Masters of Imagination*. Mike Benton's book on the great comic book masters didn't include anybody after Steve Ditko (chronologically speaking).
2. The passing of the King.
3. A week spent in the company of Dave Sim, whose persuasive arguments regarding the advantages of self-publishing eventually swayed me.
4. *Cerebus* #186.
5. *Hopes*: That the *From Hell* movie deal goes through all the way and wifey gets to buy us a house and a piano. *Fears*: Everybody stops reading comics because of all the crap in the medium. *Predictions*: Eddie Campbell gets to be famous

The Pros Look Back

David Chelsea

writer/artist, *Welcome to the Zone*; contributing artist, *The Big Book of Urban Legends*:

1. The collapse of the speculator market.
2. The Mike Diana case.
3. I lost 10 pounds.
4. *The Frank Collection* by Jim Woodring.
5. More superhero independents will be launched by unemployed Marvel editors. More alternative cartoonists will decide to eliminate the middleman and self-publish.

Jana "Legs" Christy

artist, *Very Vicky*:

1. The Flaming Carrot/Herbie team-up. Haven't read it. Love the idea.
2. Dave Sim doing Sinatra on our answering machine repeatedly. It's sad but true. No offense Dave, but I hope things get better in '95.
3. All these women artists and still the characters can't dress. C'mon, ladies!

4. *Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis*. (The one where they meet the crazy Scotsman! Aaachh!)

5. *Hopes*: That the freemasons will get out of this industry! *Fears*: That I'll never be able to quit my day job and that my lunatic boss will be caught once again with his pants off.

Predictions: That the Bronx Cocktail will make its comeback. (You heard it here first, folks!)

Evan Dorkin

writer/artist, *Milk & Cheese*, *Hectic Planet*, *Dork*, *Disney Adventures*, *Instant Piano*; writer, *Space Ghost: Coast To Coast*, *Predator: Bad Blood*, who f---ing gave a shit:

1. Besides fear, anger or loathing? Bad comic stores going out of business, comic publishers going out of business, *Bone* doing well as an independent b & w (although retailers aren't looking at other books that could break out as well). *HERO* ditching its price guide, Jim Shooter (temporarily) unemployed, the comic industry getting a swift kick in the ass; you can't sell the same dumb crap to the same group of people forever. Not that anyone will learn from this. Self-publishers, minipeople and personal 'zines on the uprise.

2. Comics today are a cheap petri dish for other entertainment media. Comics are now becoming

nothing more than instant multimedia licensed product. People are creating comics with CD-ROM, film and game deals in mind, not plot, story or art. Everybody is so hot to get a licensing deal that the projects are (more now than ever) high concept and low involvement. Also, the proliferation of half-naked warrior women in ridiculous outfits is nauseating, as is the continual "dumbing down" of the industry and rampant egos all around. Also bad: some good comic shops closing, Kirby's death, et al.

3. In my career: Getting a lot of work outside the comics field. In my so-called "art": My inking has improved. In the real world, we finally moved out of our horrible apartment and into a beautiful house, and I'm not dead yet.

4. I'm thinking ... actually, I'm glad about *Action Girl Comics*, but I'm biased. But I think it's a good book and a necessary one. Otherwise, if you count it, *City of Glass* by Mazzucchelli/others. I didn't like much this year. I wanted to.

5. No one will really do much to increase comics' potential, readership or public acceptance. The industry will retrench further. The good effect will be that people who shouldn't have been in this industry will be shaken out, the bad effect is that the "hot book" cycle will inevitably begin again as print runs drop. Some books will actually be rare again, prices for these will escalate and the whole stupid affair will rev up. I wish retailers would clean their stores up, order different books and attract new customers; that publishers would do the same, distributors would help push general interest, humor, children's,



Colleen Doran

writer/artist, *A Distant Soil*, *Valer*:

1. The collapse of the speculator market. 2. The Mike Diana case. 3. I lost 10 pounds. 4. *The Frank Collection* by Jim Woodring. 5. More superhero independents will be launched by unemployed Marvel editors. More alternative cartoonists will decide to eliminate the middleman and self-publish.

4. *Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis*. (The one where they meet the crazy Scotsman! Aaachh!)

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2. Comics today are a cheap petri dish for other entertainment media. Comics are now becoming

The Pros Look Back:

HEY PRO! WHAT'S THE MOVIE YOU'RE REALLY GLAD YOU SAW THIS YEAR (BESIDES *PULP FICTION*)?

MOVIES

John Mitchell

Twentieth Century with John Barrymore and Carole Lombard. (Oops! That was 1934—I lose track).

Jana Christy

We don't go to see movies in theaters cause we're self-publishers and can't afford it and also cause there's just a bunch of crap out there, so I'd have to say *The Sin Of Harold Diddlebock*.

Alex Ross

Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. There aren't nearly enough Australian out-back drag queen films.

John Byrne

Last Action Hero. I missed it in the theater since I foolishly accepted the pan reviews, but caught it on cable and found it delightful.

Roberta Gregory

Probably *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl* because there was so little I could resolve about it.

Mark Evanier

I only saw one movie this year: Wendy Pini dragged me to see *The Lion King* and I enjoyed it immensely, even if we did sit there and play "Count the Kimba Similarities."

Donna Barr

The Lion King. But "glad" wasn't the word. "Funeral" was.

Jim Woodring

Natural Born Killers is my favorite film of the past five years. I really liked the way it glorified violence.

Eddie Campbell

Shadowlands.

Colleen Doran

Forrest Gump.

Jo Duffy

Tombstone.

Al Gordon

Spinal Tap Special Edition laserdisc.



Alan Grant

Freaks (Reissue on laser disc).

Bo Hampton

How to Get Ahead in Advertising.

Greg Hyland

Ed Wood. Secret Defenders.

Lovern Kindzierski

Naked by Mike Leigh.

Terry LaBan

The Iron Monkey.

Jeph Loeb

Four Weddings and a Funeral.

Scott McCloud

Ed Wood.

Andy Mangels

Priscilla, Queen of the Desert.

Jeff Mariotte

The Shawshank Redemption.

Mike Mignola

Orlando.

Bill Morrison

Ed Wood.

Terry Nantier

Farewell My Concubine.

James A. Owen

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein by Kenneth Branagh.

Joe Quesada

A Perfect World.

Steven T. Seagle

New: Quiz Show, Ed Wood. Again: A River Runs Through It.

Dave Sim

Ed Wood.

Louis Small Jr.

The Shawshank Redemption.

Jay Stephens

The Professional was pretty good, but I preferred *The Philadelphia Story*, an oldie I saw on *Saturday Night at the Movies*.

Don Simpson

A tie: *Ed Wood*, which made me realize that pursuing one's own dream may be crazy, but what the hell; and *Forrest Gump*, which made me realize that believing in yourself may be retarded, but what the hell?

Steve Remen

Kramer vs. Kramer. How do they make the monsters look so real?



The Pros Look Back

women's, small press books. Superhero books sell themselves. I wish the alternative/self-publishing scene was less pretentious and self-centered and the mainstream less inept and egotistical. The industry will throw buzzwords around like "quality" as long as profits are down; when the industry rebounds, no one will care again. Don't get me started! I'm sick and cranky!

Jo Duffy

writer, *Catwoman*, *Nestrobber*, *A Distant Soil*:

1. The Marvel management bloodbath and publishing implosion. (Nice, Jo.)
2. The change of writers on *Catwoman*. (Vengeful...)
3. See #2, above. (...yet so smug).
4. *Sin City* and *Bone*.
5. [for 1994]? What ... is next year going to be a reprint? Jeez ... I hope I at least get royalties on it.

Mark Evanier

writer, *Groo*, *The Mighty Magnor*, *Garfield & Friends*:

1. The breakdown of company loyalties: Increasingly, readers are buying what they like, instead of buying all of one company's books like they were trading card sets to be completed. Ideally, it should matter no more which company publishes a comic than it matters which company releases a CD. Brand-name loyalty causes too many stiffs to get a free ride, just because of the colophon on the cover, not the quality beneath it.
2. Easy. No more Jack Kirby.
3. There was actually a week where none of my friends died.
4. *Bone*.
5. I hope for comics with more diverse contents and fewer gimmicks, plus a new joke in *Groo*. I predict more super-powerful hysterical maniacs ... and the same joke in *Groo*.

Michael T. Gilbert

writer/artist, *Showcase*, *Harlan Ellison's Dream Corridor*, *Cracked*:

1. The purging of many opportunistic comic companies and the increase in talented self-publishers.

2. The good companies and creators that were hurt by the greed of the bad ones.

3. Writing and drawing my first *Batman* story.

4. *Wolff and Byrd*, *Johnny Dynamite*, *Batman Adventures*.

5. I hope even more of the trashy, violent comics and opportunistic publishers will disappear and that more attention will be given to comics of genuine worth. Also, let's hope we get away from creating "comic universes" (by committee!) and back to individual creators telling stories they want to tell.

Al Gordon

writer/artist, *Wildstar*:

1. The implosion.
2. The implosion.
3. We put out a cool TPB (*Wildstar*). Even though nobody saw it. Half the people I get letters from say it doesn't exist and the other half don't know it does exist...
4. ?
5. Hopefully, comics will take a swing upward and the people doing them will get into the swing.

Alan Grant

writer, *Shadow of the Bat*, *Lobo*, *Judge Anderson*, *Judge Dredd*:

1. The collapse of the collectors market.
2. The collapse of the collectors market.
3. Visiting Devils Tower in Montana (in the company of about 10,000 Hog riders out on the annual Sturges Rally Run).
4. *Groo the Wanderer*.
5. I hope to excavate the crypt under my house. I fear an ultra-nationalist government in Russia. I predict Lennox Lewis will regain the World Heavyweight Boxing title.

Roberta Gregory

writer/artist, *Naughty Bits*, *Artistic Licentiousness*:

1. I think A.P.E (Alternative Press Expo) was a bit of a milestone for those of us in the alternative press.
2. I dunno. Sounds like a lot of the mainstream guys had some economic problems, but I don't know how it affects us in the alternative/indie world, who are fairly used to economic problems. Sales on a lot of new independent titles seemed lower than

in years gone by.

3. Sales of *Naughty Bits* were steady enough, so I think I can finally scratch out a living from them (and other comics work). Rather enlightening to learn that most of the alternative artists I admire who seem very successful to me are also just barely getting along economically. Maybe this means I too am successful (at least for the time being).

4. Only one? Jeez, There's *One Bad Rat*, *Twisted Sisters*, *Jim*, *Jar of Fools*, *Armageddonquest*, *Desert Peach*, *Tomato*, *Palestine*, *Wildlife*, *Big Thing*, *Hands Off!*, *Boom Boom* and just too damn many to remember. There's a wealth of alternative material to print.

5. I think more people are going to discover "alternative and independent" comics (which really have a potentially wider appeal to people in general than superhero fantasy "mainstream" comics) and distribution will find some wider channels than those that exist today. May not be real dramatic, but it'll happen. Still an optimist after all these years.

Bill Griffith

writer/artist, *Zippy*:

1. *Twisted Sisters* #1-4 (Kitchen Sink).
2. The reprinting of Crumb's *Weirdo* stories in the white supremacist magazine *Race & Reality*.
3. My three-day collaboration with Bill (Family Circus) Keane in my *Zippy* daily.
4. *Eightball* #14 by Dan Clowes
5. Newspapers will go on-line and the beginning of the end of quaint old newsprint will commence.

Bo Hampton

artist, *Uther: The Half Dead King*, *Batman: Castle Of The Bat*:

1. Savannah College of Art Design offered a full major in Comic Book Art in Savannah, GA.
2. Doug Wildey's death.
3. Two books (graphic novels) released that I painted.
4. *Batman Adventures Annual* (Bruce Timm, Paul Dini).
5. I hope fans, generally, will develop an appreciation and demand for more storytelling and characterization and realize that it's much easier to identify with a relatively real hero than a muscle-bound pinhead. But I lead a fairly secluded existence; maybe there are fans who really look like that.

Greg Hyland

writer/artist, *Lethargic Comics*:

1. *Secret Defenders*. Evan Dorkin

getting nominated for an Eisner.

2. *Secret Defenders*. Marvel's continued disregard for quality and the rape and destruction of once-loved classic characters. San Diego and Chicago cons becoming giant circus amusement park freakfests crushing the little folks.

3. It's the first year I've made 100 percent of my income from comics, with 1995 looking even better. The rise in sales of *Lethargic Comics*. *Secret Defenders*. Sitting in

Frank and Steve's room in San Diego making "----- eating shit" cartoons and



laughing my guts out!

4. *Secret Defenders*, *Concrete*, *Hate*, *Acme Novelty Library*, all the *Superman* titles and *The Big Book of Urban Legends*.

5. *Hopes*: I hope I one day get the power to decide who lives and who dies. And I want a *Star Trek* later. *Fears*: When people are looking for the "next *Bone*" all they really want is a first printing black-and-white comic that will go for \$150+ in the future.

Predictions: Cons will get worse. Marvel will get worse. UFOs will land on the White House lawn on May 18, 1995. *HERO* will give *Lethargic* a preview book and use Greg's letter art.

Gerard Jones

writer, *JLA*, *Hulk 2099*, *Prime*, *Ultraforce*, *Solitaire*, *Freex* and probably other stuff I've blocked from my memory:

1. Um...
2. How much space do I have?
3. Um...
4. Lemme see, I think I read one ... Oh yeah, it was *Jimmy Olsen* #36 where Jimmy goes to Krypton and meets baby Kal-El and Krypto the puppy.
5. *Fears*? That it'll be just as long as 1994.

Cam Kennedy

artist, *Star Wars: Dark Empire*:

1. Diana Schutz bein' made editor in chief at Dark Horse Comics.
2. Me buyin' Mike Richardson a pair of bright yellow tartan trousers with a 32-inch inside leg before I'd actually met him.
3. Makin' it to 50 an' gettin' over

Mike Mignola

writer/artist/creator, *Hellboy*:

1. The attention smaller press books like *Bone* received. Also the increasing number of people doing creator-owned books.
2. A certain large publisher continuing to flood the market with crap.
3. *Hellboy*.
4. Jay Stephens' *Sin and Atomic City Tales*. Also *Bone* and *Sandman* #50.
5. *Hopes*: More people will read comics and more people will do comics worth reading. *Fear*: I fear everything that is bad. *Predictions*: I have no predictions, only fear.

Hepatitis A.

4. *Concrete: Killer Smile* by Paul Chadwick. *Strangers in Paradise* by Terry Moore. *Jar of Fools* by Jason Lutes.

5. *Fears*: That I'll take too much fallin' down juice, lend my *Mose Allison Prestige Collection* to somebody, forget who it was and not get it back.

Lovern Kindzierski

colorist, *Catwoman: Last Angel*, *Batman/Predator II*, *X-Men*; writer, *Lunatik*, *Agents Of Law*:

1. *Marvels* was the best thing in or to comics. It was new and different, yet it recaptured the glory that was.
2. The worst thing to happen to comics was the passing of a great

creator, Jack Kirby.

3. *Lunatik*, the character I co-created and the story that I wrote were published in *Marvel Comics Presents*.

4. *Marvels*.

5. I hope that my friends are successful. I'm afraid that you are all in for a very long year. And I predict that the publishers will continue to jockey for position 'til late summer.

Denis Kitchen

publisher, *Kitchen Sink Press, Inc.*:

1. The comics industry received a wake-up call in the form of a sudden and prolonged market slump. In my opinion this was an inevitable reaction to the continuing disproportionate reliance on overhyped superhero comics. While painful for many, I regard this reality check as ultimately in the best interests of the industry.
2. Many retailers, distributors, creators and publishers individually suffered as a result of the market downturn.
3. Contrary to overall industry trends, Kitchen Sink Press enjoyed a banner year in 1994—which only enhanced our 25th anniversary celebration.
4. Robert Crumb's *Introducing Kafka*.
5. I hope that Kitchen Sink and its creators enjoy another banner year in 1995. Less selfishly, I hope the inevitable, gimmicky, superhyped, heroic comics are a less dominant portion of the market in 1995 and further hope that more sophisticated, intelligent, innovative and stimulating comics become prevalent. I predict that these changes will occur. I fear that the changes will occur at much more of a snail's pace than we need.

Todd Klein

letterer, *Sandman*, *Uncle Scrooge*, *Deathblow*, *Batman*, *The Spectre*:

1. A return to saner buying practices as the speculators moved away. More emphasis on good stories.
2. The deaths of Jack Kirby and Don Thompson—and the demise of several companies, such as Eclipse and Defiant.
3. Working with many fine writers and artists, especially Neil Gaiman and Don Rosa. Winning the Eisner. Designing new logos for *Spider-Man*, *Fantastic Four* and the *X-Men*.
4. *Sandman*.
5. I hope the market continues to support diversity and allows me to work on lots of different types of projects.

Terry LaBan

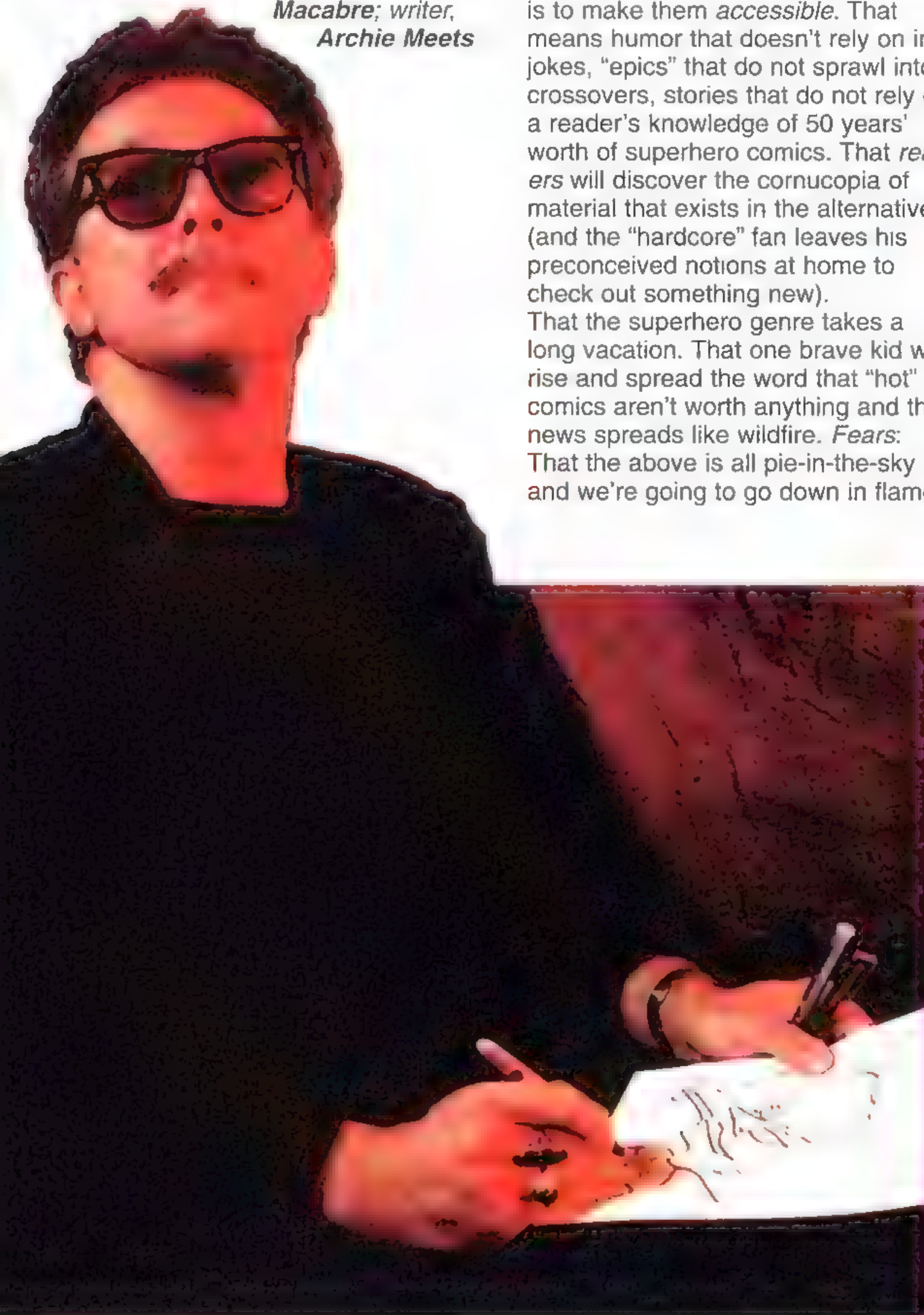
writer/artist, *Cud*, *Heavy Metal*, *Blab*, *Details* magazine:

The Pros Look Back

1. The superhero market went bust.
2. The superhero market went bust.
3. I signed a contract to do *Cud* with Dark Horse.
4. *Powerhouse Pepper* by Basil Wolverton.
5. I hope the new *Cud* series is a smashing success and the market as a whole becomes more receptive to non-superhero books. I'm afraid neither of those things will happen and that I'll end up living under a bridge.

Batton Lash

Cartoonist/ Publisher, *Wolff & Byrd*,
Counselors of the Macabre; writer,
Archie Meets



Punisher; contributor, *Big Book of Urban Legends*:

1. The rise of self-publishing; creators taking charge of their projects by producing and selling their own books.
2. Short-term thinking! (Looking for quick remedies to solve industrywide recession.)
3. Getting married!
4. *Palookaville*.
5. *Hopes*: That the retailing community has the savvy to be *salespeople*—to carry and promote the wide, diverse wealth of material available and reach out to the general public. That creators will realize that the key to bringing new readers to their books is to make them *accessible*. That means humor that doesn't rely on in-jokes, "epics" that do not sprawl into crossovers, stories that do not rely on a reader's knowledge of 50 years' worth of superhero comics. That *readers* will discover the cornucopia of material that exists in the alternatives (and the "hardcore" fan leaves his preconceived notions at home to check out something new). That the superhero genre takes a long vacation. That one brave kid will rise and spread the word that "hot" comics aren't worth anything and the news spreads like wildfire. *Fears*: That the above is all pie-in-the-sky and we're going to go down in flames!



Jeph Loeb

writer, *Cable*, *Batman: Madness*,
Uncanny X-Men Annual:

1. *Marvels*—beautifully written and handsomely produced.
2. Frank Miller's attack on Jim Lee, Tim Sale and Mike Nasser in *Sin City*. Frank, you have a telephone, use it. Don't air your gripes in the letter col.
3. *Cable*.
4. *Marvels*.
5. More books=more work for the industry.

Heidi MacDonald

editor, *Disney Adventures*:

1. With the collapse of the superhero market, books like *Bone*, *Jar of Fools*, *True Swamp* and *Strangers in Paradise* stood out and began to find an audience.
2. The direct-sales market collapsed under the weight of its own inertia; readers were repelled by the sale gimmicks.

Rick Parker

artist, *Beavis and Butt-head*:

1. The publications and sale of millions of copies of *Beavis and Butt-head* comic book.
2. The failure to market *Beavis and Butt-head* comic books to the general public (i.e. those persons not currently reading comics in the U.S. and elsewhere), thereby missing a great opportunity to turn new people on to our Native American art form.
3. Meeting thousands of *Beavis and Butt-head* fans in the United States.
4. Uh huh huh. Could you like repeat the question?
5. *Hopes*: More quality comics, fewer gimmicks and other mass-market manipulations. *Fears*: Republican censorship of comics. *Predictions*: Lots of people who get into comics for the "wrong reasons" looking for work elsewhere.

The Pros Look Back:

BOOKS

Joe Quesada

I'm an artist ... you're joking, right?

Todd Klein

It's so hard to pick just one. I guess *Steel Beach* by John Varley.

Cam Kennedy

Getting into the Business of Comics by Lurene Haines.

Terry Moore

Berke Breathed, *His Kisses Are Dreamy—But Those Hairballs Down My Cleavage!*

Mike Allred

Tin Tin in the New World by Frederic Tuten. *City of Glass* by David Mazzuchelli and Paul Karasik.

Roberta Gregory

Dr. Mary Walker, the Little Lady in Pants by Charles Snyder, while researching a story I was illustrating for *Medal of Honor* #5—learning about the complex and controversial life of a person who I previously knew only as a photograph.

Mike Baron

The Neon Rain by James Lee Burke.

Kurt Busiek

A Long Line Of Dead Men by Lawrence Block.

Eddie Campbell

The Devil at Large (Erica Jong on Henry Miller).

Wilfred

Beavis and Butt-head's Ensucklopedia (cool!).

Colleen Doran

The People of the Lie by M. Scott Peck.

Evan Dorkin

Christmas in July: The Life and Art of Preston Sturges.

John Mitchell

Midnight in the Garden of Good and

Evil by John Brendt. (It blows the lid on Savannah, GA—Vicky country!)

Jo Duffy

Night Train to Memphis by Elizabeth Peters.

Michael T. Gilbert

Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*.

Alan Grant

The Zon Power Discovery by Frank R. Wallace.

Bill Griffith

Trading with the Enemy by Tom Miller.

Greg Hyland

Generation Ecch by Jason Cohen, Michael Krugman and Evan Dorkin.

Denis Kitchen

The Fermata by Nicholson Baker.

David Chelsea

Stillwell and the American Experience in China by Barbara Tuchman. I'm glad I got around to it; it only came out in 1971!

Terry LaBan

Voltaires Bastards by John Ralston Saul.

Batton Lash

Blood in the Streets by James Dale Davidson.

Jeph Loeb

The Man in the Ceiling by Jules Pfeifer.

Scott McCloud

Envisioning Information by Edward Tufte.

Ron Marz

Moonshot by Alan Shepard and Dick Slayton.

James A. Owen

From Hell, The Complete Scripts by Alan Moore, edited by Steve Bissette.

David Mack

Speed Tribes by Karl Taro Greenfield.

Gary Reed

The Hot Zone by Richard Preston. *The Coming Plague* by Laurie Garret.

John Byrne

The Mysterious William Shakespeare by Charlton Ogborn, since it brought together in one volume all the best arguments I've heard on the answer to the "authorship question."

James Robinson

Kiki's Paris by Kluver and Martin. *Gods of Heaven—Earth* by Joel-Peter Witkin.

Alex Ross

Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*. It took a year to get around to it, but it was worth every bit of praise Scott got for it.

Steven T. Seagle

My Secret History by Paul Theroux.

Dave Sim

Norman Mailer's *Presidential Papers*.

Don Simpson

The I Ching.

Jay Stephens

Geoff Ryman's *Was*.

Martin Wagner

The Creators by Daniel J. Boorstin.

Roarin' Rick Veitch

Pride and Feathering—The Life of Don Simpson.

Heidi MacDonald

No time for books!

Rick Parker

Charles Panati's *Extraordinary Endings of Practically Everyone and Everybody*.

Gerard Jones

All of 'em, as long as they didn't have friggin' pictures!

The Pros Look Back

3. I was able to help start "The Friends of Lulu," an organization for women in comics and the response was overwhelming.
4. *Acme Novelty Library* #2.
5. The direct-sales market will rebuild itself—growth will be painfully slow, but it will be *real* growth. More people will be out of work in the biz than ever before.

Scott McCloud

writer/artist, the continuing saga that is *Understanding Comics*:

1. The mass exodus of mindless speculators from the market and retailers waking up to the need for diversity and originality.
2. The mass exodus of mindless speculators from the market and *some* retailers who *refuse* to wake up.
3. The two or three weeks I actually got to work or spend time at home when I wasn't out on the road.
4. *Jar Of Fools* by Jason Lutes.
5. For 1995: Not much. For 2005: The complete reinvention of comics from top to bottom.

David Mack

writer/artist, *Kabuki*:

1. The readers of comics seem to be fed up with all of the competing super universes and are looking for alternative story lines that don't insult their I.Q. Hence the independent field has become a more fertile place.
2. All this "Bad Girl" nonsense.
3. My book *Kabuki* has received both good words from critics and good sales from fans.
4. *Mr. Punch*.
5. The market will improve and be less tolerant of mediocrity. People will take the comics field more seriously as a medium. I hope to help this process to fruition.

Andy Mangels

writer, *Badrock & Co.*, *Troll Halloween Special*, *Elfquest: Blood of Ten Chiefs*, *HERO ILLUSTRATED*; editor, *Gay Comics*:

1. The decline of gimmick covers, polybags and rampant over-speculation. The reemergence of writers as

an important voice in an artist-dominated industry, thanks in part to the promotional efforts of Malibu. Even Image has been bringing in established writers.

2. The loss of heroes. Cynicism and nastiness abounded and heroes were exchanged for darker, "grittier" bastardizations and abominations of the original characters. (See *Zero Hour*, among others.)

3. Being hired to work for Extreme Studios on various projects, including the upcoming *Bloodwulf* series. Having worked in just about every genre in the business, it's been fun working on superheroes who are heroic.

4. *Sandman*, *Naughty Bits*.

5. *Hope*: That writers will continue to grow in popularity along with the artists. Predict that only a few writers will get the bulk of the fans due to herd mentality by the fan community at large and shameless pandering by the comic press, despite the fact that there are many very talented writers in the business.

That DC and Marvel get a clue. Marvel shouldn't allow any editors to writer books. DC should put a moratorium on grim and gritty characters, taking an example from Mark Waid, James Robinson and Kurt Busiek for writing hopeful and heroic characters. Predict that neither company will get a clue and their sales will continue to drop.

Jeff Mariotte

writer, *Gen 13*, *WildC.A.T.s*, *WildC.A.T.s Adventures*:

1. Increased acceptance of a diverse range of comics—*Bone*, *Strangers In Paradise*, etc.
2. Shrinking sales across the board and the loss of Jack Kirby.
3. The birth of my son, David Wallace Mariotte on Oct. 15.
4. *Strangers In Paradise*.
5. I hope the market levels off so publisher and retailers can plan more effectively. I hope Marvel stops buying stuff. I fear we'll see more people going out of business, which hurts all of us. I predict we'll see some terrific comics in '95!!

Ron Marz

writer, *Silver Surfer*, *Green Lantern*, *Stormwatch*, *Cosmic Powers*:

1. The realization by both publishers and readers that stories and



James Robinson

writer, *Witchcraft*, *Illegal Alien*, *Starman*, *Grendel Tales*, *Tales of Suspense*, *WildC.A.T.s*:

1. The decent comics that managed to get published.
2. Too many frills, too much the same, not enough thought.
3. *Golden Age* #4 finally published, monthly *Starman* Book, new Kharmin Ghia.
4. *Hellboy*, *Bone*, Paul Grist's *Kane*, *Sin City*, *A Dame To Kill For*.
5. *Hope*: *Starman* will still be being published. *Fear*: That Colleen Doran will instill more of that damned lurking effeminacy into comics; the last truly male medium. *Predictions*: too many comics, not enough stories.

characterization actually matter.

2. The market being flooded (by Marvel in particular) with material that can't be considered anything more than a waste of trees. We should be ashamed of ourselves as an industry for trying to foist such junk upon our audience.

3. The number of interesting projects that came my way—most of which you'll see in '95 (I hope).

4. *Hellboy*.

5. Ask somebody who's got time to think about it. I just hope I can take weekends off.

Angel (Don't call me "Pappy") Medina

artist, *Blackwulf*:

1. We all survived the "Big Crash."
2. That we *all* survived the "Big Crash."

3. Finally getting the hang of using a spork.
4. *Hellboy*.
5. *Hopes*: That toweling off after showering will remain popular with the kids. *Fears*: only two; Bad-Penny-Phobia: Fear of a toilet not flushing "all the way" during a crowded party, and Phobicphobia: Fear of frightful fears. *Predictions*: Love will continue to be the sweetest of illusions.

John Mitchell

writer, *Very Vicky*:

1. The modernizing of the Archie Comics line, so that they lose all their charm in the name of mindless OOOMF! appeal. So perhaps America is clamoring for a new teen icon?
2. After jotting down two answers, one pertaining to the negative aspects of my fellow self-publishers and another a grumpy summation of writer/artists with unbalanced talent quotients—I've settled into that third option—*keepin' my big yap shut!!* I don't know nothin' about nobody! My work speaks for me!
3. Our role as a self-publisher gave us the opportunity to make public adventures in cocktail archaeology, starting with the definitive Old Fashioned recipe, to be followed with an account of our unearthing of the long lost Bronx Cocktail.
4. *Acme Novelty Library*.
5. *Hopes*: That DC will allow us to handle the revival of the *Dean Martin/Jerry Lewis* comic. *Fears*: That they will stick us with the *Bob Hope* comic instead. *Predictions*: Three words: *Swing with Scooter!*

Terry Moore

writer/artist/publisher, *Strangers in Paradise*:

1. *Marvels* by Busiek and Ross, everything I imagined comics could be.
2. Every new book that featured another renegade misfit anti-hero on a personal quest for justice through revenge. Sheesh! Lighten up!
3. In San Diego, when Will Eisner asked to meet *me*!
4. *Marvels!* (And *Madman!*)
5. I predict Marvel will give Mrs. Jack Kirby millions in unpaid residuals. Fone Bone will grow hair. Dave Sim will get married. James Owen will sell *Starchild* to DC. Gary Groth will kiss and make up and world peace will break out overnight, beginning in Cleveland, skipping Arkansas entirely.

Bill Morrison

artist/writer/editor, *Bongo Comics*:

1. There seems to be a renewed interest in non-superhero comics. I'm not knocking the long underwear types, but I think variety is a healthy thing.
2. It has to be the death of Jack Kirby.
3. I got to travel around the country and meet some really great people at conventions and signings.
4. Mike Allred's *Madman Comics* (any issue).
5. Since I have no psychic or prophetic gifts, I leave that sort of thing for more qualified individuals. My hope is that we'll someday come to know true peace. My fear is that we never will.

Terry Nantier

publisher, *NBM Publishing*:

1. I think we can call 1994 "The Year of the Independents." Everybody got sick of speculative booms and busts and the glut of superheroes looked most unenticing indeed. There was, as a consequence, a lot more attention on variety and titles that have been around and proven, and discoveries like *Bone*. Quality once again made its way back to the top.
2. Continued lack of serious attention by the general media and thus the general public. Backlash against Superman overkill (pun intended) and other speculation-inducing gimmicks did not help.
3. We certainly rode the increased recognition factor for independents very successfully and continued to strengthen our position as a leading alternative for high-quality comics from around the world.
4. *Streak of Chalk*.
5. *Hope*: Alternatives. Independents get bigger and better. *Fear*: Back to the same ole sludge. *Prediction*: My crystal ball tells me NBM should have a record-breaking year with a number of exciting big-name projects out!!

Graham Nolan

artist, *Detective Comics*, *Sgt. Rock Special*:

1. I haven't a clue.
2. The fact that John Romita Sr. didn't have any projects released.
3. The birth of my second daughter Rebecca Jane Nolan.
4. *Man Without Fear*, Frank Miller and John Romita, Jr.
5. '94 was a soft year. I hope in '95 we can entice new readers to our products and retain the old ones by delivering them quality *storytelling*. There are a lot of comics on the stands that are nothing more than 22 pages of convention sketches! Let's get back to exciting storytelling!

James A. Owen

writer/artist/publisher, *Starchild*:

1. The absence (or loss) of speculators and profiteers in all levels of the marketplace—fans, retailers, distributors and publishers—forcing the industry to reevaluate the conditions under which business is conducted.
2. The aforementioned reevaluation is not over yet, and a great number of people—again, in all levels—will not be able to make the necessary adjustments.
3. *Starchild* sales and prominence stabilized at a really comfortable level, behind which working on a project with Alan Moore for *Negative Burn* runs a really close second.
4. *Jar of Fools* by Jason Lutes.
5. In 1995, success and stability will walk hand in hand with the maintenance of integrity of individual vision. Once again, this applies to all levels of true marketplace and the medium. Create what you like, buy what you like, sell what you like, publish what you like and to hell with critics.

Joe Quesada

writer/artist, *Ash*:

1. The mass exodus of speculators.
2. Due to the proliferation of terrible, substandard books glutting the market, we lost some actual readers with the speculators.
3. The formation of Event Comics, and Cindy Crawford is single again.
4. *Golden Age* (DC Comics), *Firearm* (Malibu) and *Archer & Armstrong* (only kidding).
5. Everyone will be cutting down on titles in a massive way! The quality of books will improve geometrically, as will the unemployment rate among artists. An upcoming paper shortage will seriously hurt our industry as well as the fans. The new *Batman* movie will be the best one yet! Sales will finally bottom out and will determine



The Pros Look Back:

HEY PRO! WHAT ALBUM ARE YOU REALLY GLAD YOU HEARD THIS YEAR?

MUSIC

Neil Gaiman

writer, *Sandman*

Tori Amos, *Under The Pink*; Ian Dury, *Sex and Drugs and Rock and Roll*

Stephen De Stefano

Co-creator, *Instant Piano*; Storyboard

Artist, *The Ren & Stimpy* TV show;

The Beau-Hunks Play The Little

Rascal Music; Beastie Boys, *Ill*

Communication; Beck, *Mellow Gold*

Gary Reed

Probably my favorite purchase this year is *Nirvana Unplugged*. Hey, grunge is nothing more than '60s music with the amps turned up!

Jo Duffy

Jingle Cats!

Rick Parker

Frederic Chopin, *Nocturnes*

Jeph Loeb

Sheryl Crow, *Tuesday Night Music Club*

Mike Allred

Smashing Pumpkins, *Siamese Dream*

Dave Sim

Rolling Stones, *Voodoo Lounge* (Did any other albums come out?)

Kurt Busiek

A new copy of *Now Ain't The Time For Your Tears* by Wendy James, to replace the one that got stolen

Heldi MacDonald

Juan Esquivel, *Music for Space Age Bachelor Pads*

Angel Medina

I bought the chanting Benedictine monks album. I haven't really listened to it yet, but I sorta feel "saved," y'know?

Jana "Legs" Christy

Tennessee Ernie Ford, *Bless Your Pea Pickin Heart*

Denis Kitchen

Jimmie Noone,

1929-1930

(French Import)

Mark Evanier

Original Broadway

Cast Album

revival of *Damn*

Yankees

Todd Klein

The Cambridge

Singers, *The Look*

in the Clear Air

John Rutter conductor

David Mack

Natural Born

Killers soundtrack

Ron Marz

Nine Inch Nails,

Downward Spiral

James A. Owen

Sarah McLachlan, *Fumbling Towards Ecstasy*

John Mitchell

Ella Mae Morse, *Capital Collector's Series*

Alex Ross

Something Else by The Kinks. It's 30 years old, but it was new to me.

Graham Nolan

Jimmy Buffett, *Fruitcakes*

Steve Remen

Consolidated, *Business of Punishment*

Michael T. Gilbert

Gilbert and Sullivan Favorites

James Robinson

Jimmy Scott, *Dreams*

Cam Kennedy

Mose Allison, *The Prestige Collection*



Bought this on vinyl in '62 an' since then it's gotten really crackly. My little heart was a thumpin' when I found it rereleased on CD.

Steven T. Seagle

Everything But the Girl, *Amplified Heart*

Joe Quesada

Green Day, *Dookie*

Louis Small Jr.

Steve Wonder's *Songs in the Key of Life*

Lovern Kindzierski

Leonard Cohen, *The Future*

Bill Griffith

Negativland, *Over the Edge Vol. 7*

Jim Woodring

Nirvana, *In Utero*; Rachmaninoff, *Vespers*

Roarin' Rick Veitch

Dandy Don Sings Leadbelly

who's left standing. An amazing discovery will be made! An industrywide trend will begin! Editors will try to improve sales by having writers try to tell better stories instead of changing character costumes or giving them big guns and shoulder pads! The Bad Girl craze will fizzle. Scott McCloud will publish *Understanding Todd*: Does he mumble, or is it me? Frank Miller will write more great stories. Joe Quesada will marry Cindy Crawford.

Jeff Rebner

artist, **WildC.A.T.s Sourcebook**:

1. Tom DeFalco bumped off at Marvel.
2. Return of Rob Liefeld.
3. Got a job at WildStorm.
4. *Batman/Punisher* by John Romita Jr. and Chuck Dixon.
5. Implosion in comics.

Gary Reed

publisher, *Caliber Press*, president of *Stabur Corp.*, vice president of *Todd Toys*:

1. Probably the best thing overall this year was the attention paid to many of the smaller publishers, especially the self-published ones. Although I'd like to see more attention also to the independent publishers—just because a book is offered through a publishing house shouldn't dilute the quality of the book.
2. The lack of perception by many of the retailers in not realizing what the true market is. This caused a consequential collapse of the market in many areas and many retailers suffered because of it. Much of this was caused by the media rush in propelling the myth of many comics but that was more of a 1993 problem that carried over into the first part of 1994. Being a retailer also, I know how hard many retailers work and to see some of them having to close their stores after years of business is a sad affair.
3. On a personal level, having another healthy girl (that makes four!). In business, nothing dominates as the single best but a lot of good things this year came about: The association with Todd Toys brought me into a whole different world and business, the hiring of Jim Pruett as an associate publisher, which relieves my work load tremendously, watching some of my favorite creators who did a lot of work for Caliber in their early days (such as Guy Davis, Vince Locke and Phil Hester) firmly establish themselves in the biz, and the growth of Caliber outside the direct market, which can only help to make us a stronger company.
4. Outside of Caliber, *From Hell* is my

favorite and *Sandman* is a close second. Both of these deserve every award they win.

5. My hopes for the year is that retailers will evaluate each book individually and ignore who publishes it and give a lot of books out there a fair chance. I think it would pay for the retailers to diversify their offerings. My greatest fear is that the misconception that a huge audience is out in America waiting to discover superheroes will drive more of the retailers and publishers into a deeper tailspin. Let's curtail the hype and maybe some of the publishers will stop believing their own press releases.

Steve Remen

writer/artist, **Lethargic Comics**:

1. The creation of Superman and superheroes. These innovations should propel comics to new heights.
2. The publication of *Seduction of the Innocent*. This book can only do great harm to our industry.
3. My starring role in *The Real World*.
4. *Secret Defenders* (nuff said).
5. I hope for the return of "stubby" beer bottles. I fear Kitty-Cat-Guy. I predict that the government will actually start to tax our *income* this year.

Alex Ross

artist, **Marvels**, **Sandman Mystery Theater**, **Empty Love Stories**:

1. The enormous spanking that comics has received and is still receiving for being a greedy, insular, naval-gazing little industry.
2. The loss of Jack Kirby came at a time where comics looked like they should die with him.
3. How people have received my work and myself. It was far better than I could have hoped.
4. Chris Ware's *Acme Novelty Library*.
5. The comics medium, which had been the cheapest form of entertainment, should continue to reap the repercussions of the last five money-grubbing years. For my own part, I promise no more "brilliant" acetate cover ideas that allow my employers to milk you for that extra buck.

Steven T. Seagle

writer, **Sandman Mystery Theater**, **Grendel Tales: The Devil in our Midst**, **Primal Force**, **Stormwatch**, **Hawkman**, **WildC.A.T.s**, **Asylum**:

1. A surge in circulation for some of the excellent smaller press comics, perhaps signaling a return of genre diversity blooming in 1985-88, but dead on the vine since.

2. The continuing specter of censorship as my local store, Sam Silbert's Shooting Star Comics in Glendale was the next target of unwarranted legal action. It *can* happen anywhere.
3. With the help of James Robinson, Matt Wagner, Bill Kaplan, Neal Pozner, Shelly Roeburg, Karen Berger and Diana Schutz, I went from having no career in comics to having a terrific career in comics. I thank them for encouraging my return.
4. Adrian Tomine's *Optic Nerve*. I like the terse nature of the stories (in the one issue I could find).
5. I hope there will be a stronger market for comics of a more personal vision. I fear *Full House* will be renewed by ABC for *another* season. I predict I will have nothing but fun working on the new *House of Secrets* book with Teddy Kristiansen for Vertigo.

Dave Sim

writer/artist/publisher, **Cerebus**:

1. *Bone*'s runaway success, Larry Marder whipping the Image boys into shape.
2. Todd's Toys. I just don't believe that we can bring new people into the stories by going out and playing in other people's sandboxes. Ditto *The Crow* and *The Mask*. To make comics more successful, we have to do better comics—and accept the fact that the only way to build the market is one customer at a time.
3. Going out for dinner in Atlanta with Susan Alston of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.
4. *THB* and *The Ballad of Dr. Richardson* (tie) by Paul Pope.
5. *Hopes*: That more retailers figure out that "quality sells" and that "smoke and mirrors" just doesn't cut it anymore. *Fears*: None. *Predictions*: The "Spirits of Independence" events will change the comic book field in some way; Neil Gaiman will finish *Sandman*.

Don Simpson

writer/artist/publisher, **Don Simpson's Bizarre Heroes**:

1. They didn't recall the *staples* yet.
2. The artificial smoke from the Tekno booth, and Megaton Man disappearing from the pages of *HERO ILLUSTRATED* (when we clearly needed him the most). A connection? Oliver Stone?
3. I firmly established my self-publishing imprint, Fiasco Comics with eight monthly on-time issues of *Don Simpson's Bizarre Heroes* and one reprint (#0). Coming as I reach the 10-year mark on my comics career, it



fulfills my dream to publish my own creations without interference in one ongoing, never-ending title.

4. "Reads" in *Cerebus* (okay, except maybe the ending—too much like *Watchmen*) and *Bone* (by that other guy).

5. There are fresh winds blowing in the industry, and at this particular point in the development of the graphic narrative ... no wait, that's Will Eisner's line. Frankly, I predict about 30 percent of the present professional ranks will qualify for a pro badge at a major convention in two years time. 1958 saw the professional ranks slim down to Kirby, Ditko, Kubert and a handful of other sturdy, stalwart cartoonists. 1993 saw the comics industry inflate into a white giant. 1995 is the Black Hole. Conventions will survive and probably thrive as auto show-type spectacles, but cartoonists, publishers, retailers and distributors are on their way to hobo city. Those of us who survive 1995 will have something to tell our grandchildren about.

Louis Small Jr.

artist, *Lady Death*, *Chaos Effect*:

1. Comics Greatest World.
2. Kirby's demise.
3. Working for Valiant.
4. *X* and *Martha Washington Goes to War* (Dark Horse).
5. *Hopes*: Creators are hired more by drawing ability than the similarity to "name" artists. More indies profiled. Comic prices go down and level out. Companies concentrate on quality more than quantity. Garcia-Lopez does a monthly title! *Fears*: Learning "proper" anatomy becomes part of the penciling and (especially) inking prerequisite. *Predictions*: More clones of clones (artists) profiled.



Jay Stephens

writer/artist, *Sin Comics*, *Atomic City Tales*:

1. Black Eye Productions! Check it out people!
2. Hmm ... let's see ... *Spawn*, *Pitt*, *The Punisher*, the @!\$%'n X-books, *The Ultraverse*, all the other Whatchaverses ... gee whiz! So much blood! So much violence! So little script (or too much gratuitous script!) No fun! No fun!
3. I shook hands with Adam West! Yes, *Adam West*! Isn't it incredible?!
4. Chris Ware's *Acme Novelty Library*, Jason Lutes' *Jar of Fools*, Mike Mignola's *Hellboy*. I can't decide! Tie?
5. I just know in my heart that "alternative" comics will continue to attract more and more readers ... I hope that superhero comics get really good, but I'm afraid that it's unlikely as a flesh-eating virus attacking a member of Canadian Parliament. Ha ha ha ha ha! I predict Black Eye Productions will become so trend-setting and hip that you will completely pass out in amazement. So there.

Roarin' Rick Veitch

writer/artist/publisher, *Roarin' Rick's Rare Bit Fiends*:

1. *Don Simpson's Bizarre Heroes* #1.
2. *Don Simpson's Bizarre Heroes* #2.
3. *Don Simpson's Bizarre Heroes* #3.
4. *Don Simpson's Bizarre Heroes* #4.
5. Don will rest on his laurels, instead of turning the comic world's ear into a silk purse like he did in '94.

Martin Wagner

writer/artist/publisher, *Hepcats*:

1. I don't know. Any more card-scum stores go out of business?
2. Michael Diana's obscenity conviction.

3. *Hepcats* #11 led to doubling of sales.
4. *Jim*, *Acme Novelty Library*, *From Hell*.
5. I'm going to write and draw more *Hepcats*. Don't give a shit about anything else.

Willfred

artist, *Icon*, *Hardware*, *Static*:

1. *HERO ILLUSTRATED* got rid of that stupid price guide! (Hope the other guys follow your example.)
2. Seems like no new readers are picking up comic books. The conviction of Diana. Not enough Milestone coverage in any comic book magazine.
3. Got to be the new *Static* regular penciler. I met Colleen Doran (that's a real beautiful woman)!! *Slayer* live!!
4. *Sin City: A Dame To Kill For*, *Xombi*. (This book is kickass!!)
5. I hope that with the help of the retailers, people start to see Milestone books for what they are (the best comics in the market right now). If the kids don't see them in the shelves, how are they gonna notice them? I got no fears. Takin' a look back at 1994, I'll predict that all predictions will be wrong.

Jim Woodring

writer/artist, *Jim*, *Frank*:

1. The acquisition by Fantagraphics of an in-house computer production and coloring system, because anything that enables Fantagraphics to function more smoothly serves the cause of High Art in our field.
2. The death of Jack Kirby.
3. Well now, it's just been one triumph after another for me this year, and I'd hate to have to try to choose a "best" aspect, but my favorite comics-related moment came during the weekend of the San Diego Con when I was standing on the second floor gallery of the Hotel San Diego watching people at Denny Eichorn's party and getting all maudlin about what a swell bunch of people there are in this business.
4. Mark Martin's as-yet-unreleased *Crazy Boss*.
5. I hope that the all-devouring computer will provide lots of work for cartoonists so that they will be one of the few prosperous groups in America; I'm afraid that really great cartoons will become increasingly less relevant to consumers swamped in debased glitz; and I predict that the coming wave of conservatism will bring with it a demand for stupid, innocuous entertainment that will turn the stomachs and chill the hearts of free spirits everywhere. ▲

The HERO Staff Looks Back:

THESE WERE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS...

1994

MOVIES

Bad Lieutenant
The Crow
Drunken Master II
Easy Rider
Ed Wood
Forrest Gump
Man Bites Dog
The Mask
Natural Born Killers
Pulp Fiction (of course)
Rosemary's Baby
Schindler's List
Seven Samurai
The Shawshank Redemption
The Wild Bunch
Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?

BOOKS

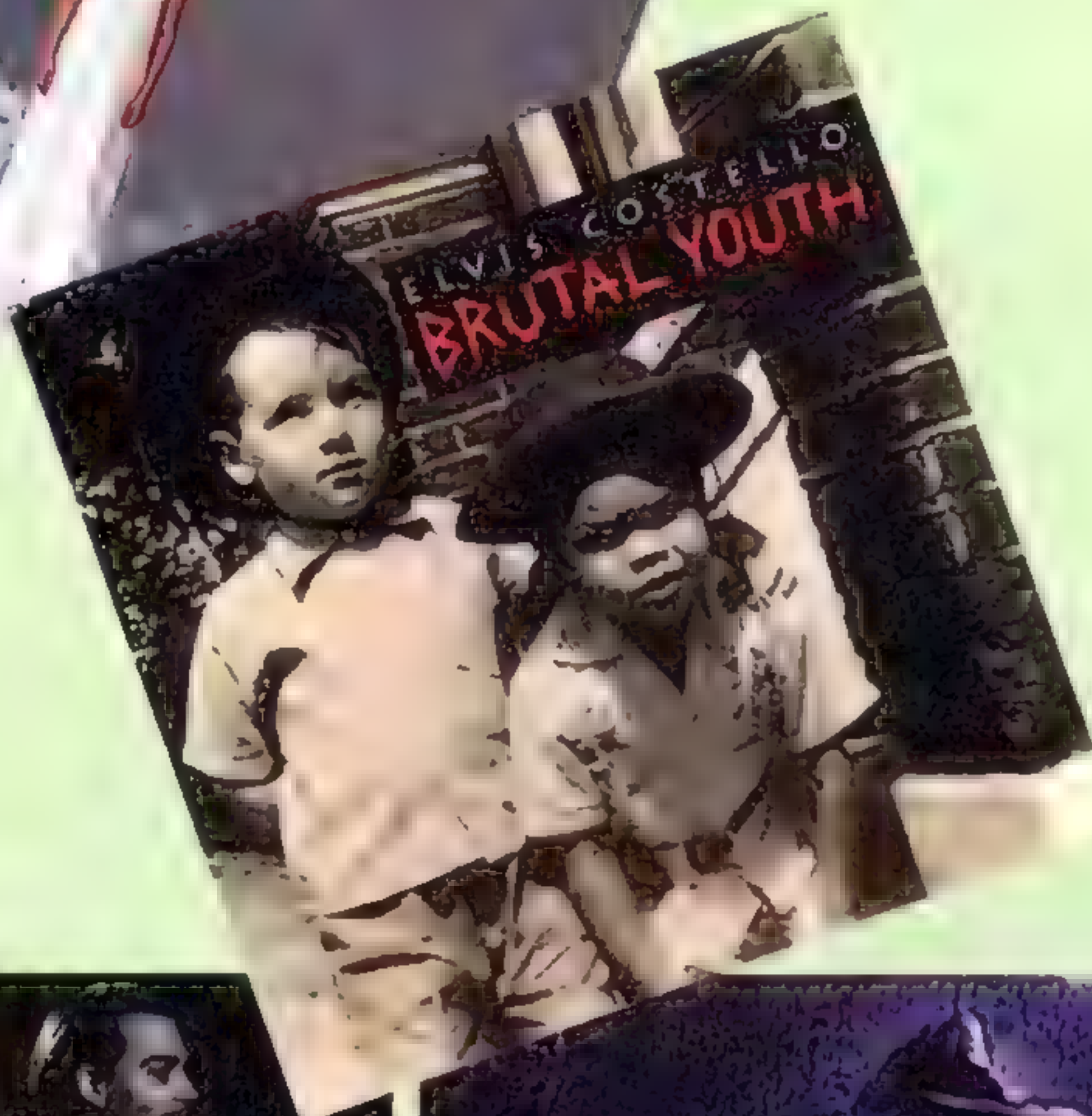
Jim Carroll, *Basketball Diaries*, *Fear of Dreaming*
Douglas Coupland, *Shampoo Planet*
Pat Conroy, *The Lords of Discipline*
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*
Robert Evans, *The Kid Stays in the Picture*
Stuart Galbraith, *Japanese Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films*
Martin Sprouse, *Sabotage in the American Workplace*
Studs Terkel, *Hard Times*
Nick Tosches, *Dino*

ALBUMS

Larry Adler/Various, *The Glory of Gershwin*
Tori Amos, *Under the Pink*
The Beatles, *Live at the BBC*
Jimmy Buffet, *Fruitcakes*
Cop Shoot Cop, *Consumer Revolt*
Elvis Costello, *Brutal Youth*
Curve, *Public Fruit*
Pop Will Eat Itself, *Dos Dedos Mis Amigos*
Howard Shore, *Ed Wood* soundtrack
Tom Waits, *Frank's Wild Years*
Soundtrack, *Godzilla vs. Mecha-Godzilla*
Rumble! The Best of Link Wray

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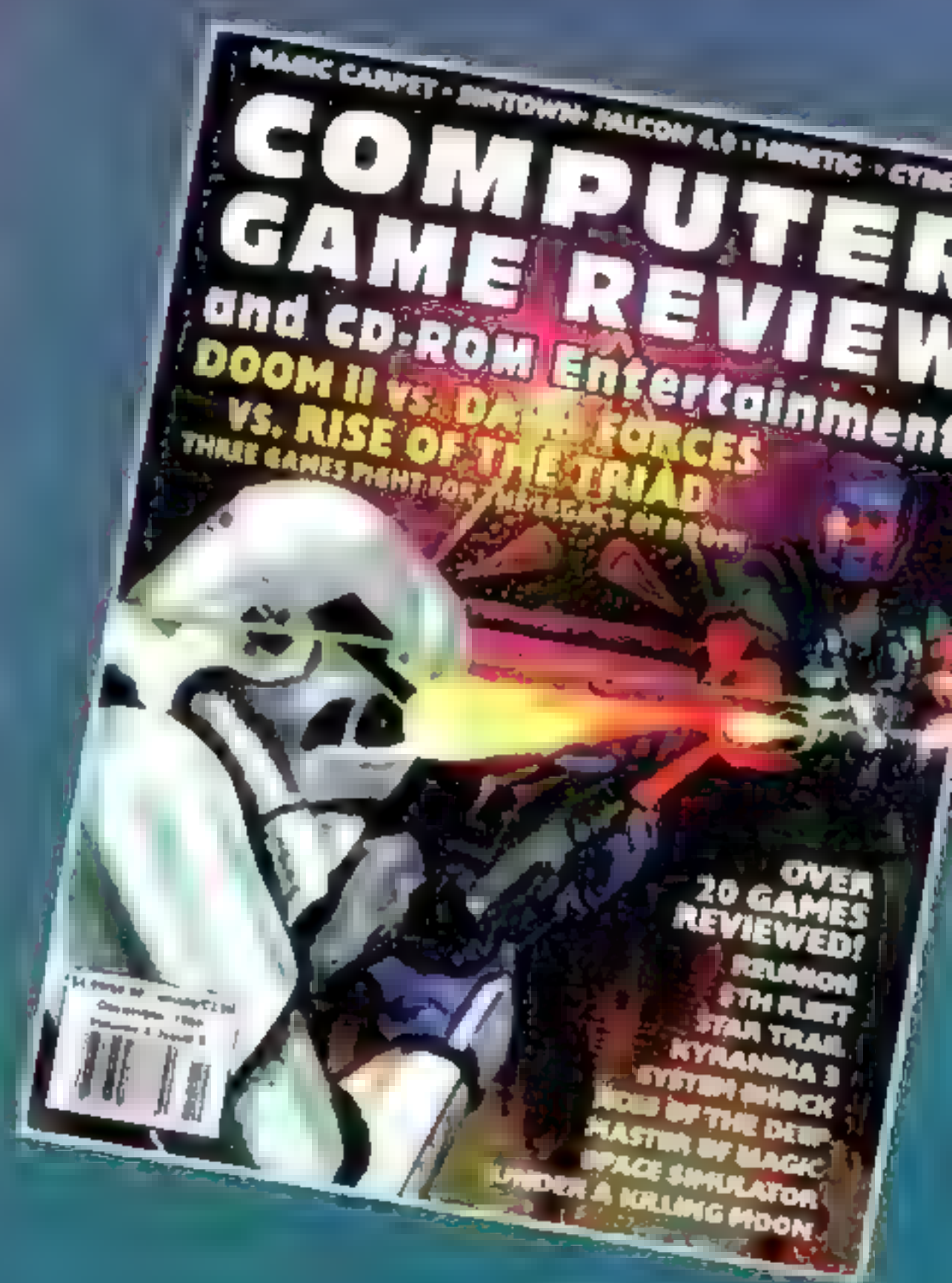
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THE

TOP

400

THE YEAR'S

BEST COMICS •

GRAPHIC

NOVELS •

ONE-SHOTS •

MINISERIES •

IN MANY WAYS, THIS WAS THE HARDEST PART OF THIS ISSUE. IF YOU DON'T THINK SO, WELL, LET'S SEE *YOU* FIND 49 WAYS TO SAY "UHHH ... THIS WAS GOOD." HERE, IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER, ARE SOME OF THE BOOKS THAT MANAGED NOT ONLY TO GET OUR ATTENTION IN 1994, BUT MANAGED TO *KEEP* IT. THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE...

STARMAN

James Robinson/Tony Harris
DC Comics

If James Robinson and Tony Harris' *Starman* wasn't the best new mainstream comic of the year, it was certainly the best thing to come out of DC's much-ballyhooed *Zero Hour* (possibly because it was never intended to tie in with *Zero Hour*), and it sealed Robinson's reputation as a top-drawer writer. Taking the traditional dysfunctional superhero clichés—the son who ridiculed his father (the original Starman) finds himself forced to step into his shoes—and brought the characters to life with a humility and grace that made the silences as powerful as the explosions. Tony Harris' art managed to keep the proceedings appropriately dark and atmospheric without making them dank and dreary. So far, it's proven to be a highly charged, emotional book. Coming from a genre that supposedly had all emotion wrung out of it the hard way, that's a major accomplishment.



MADMAN COMICS

Mike Allred
Dark Horse

Since joining the Legend imprint at Dark Horse, Mike Allred's *Madman* has only gotten better. 1950s B-movie

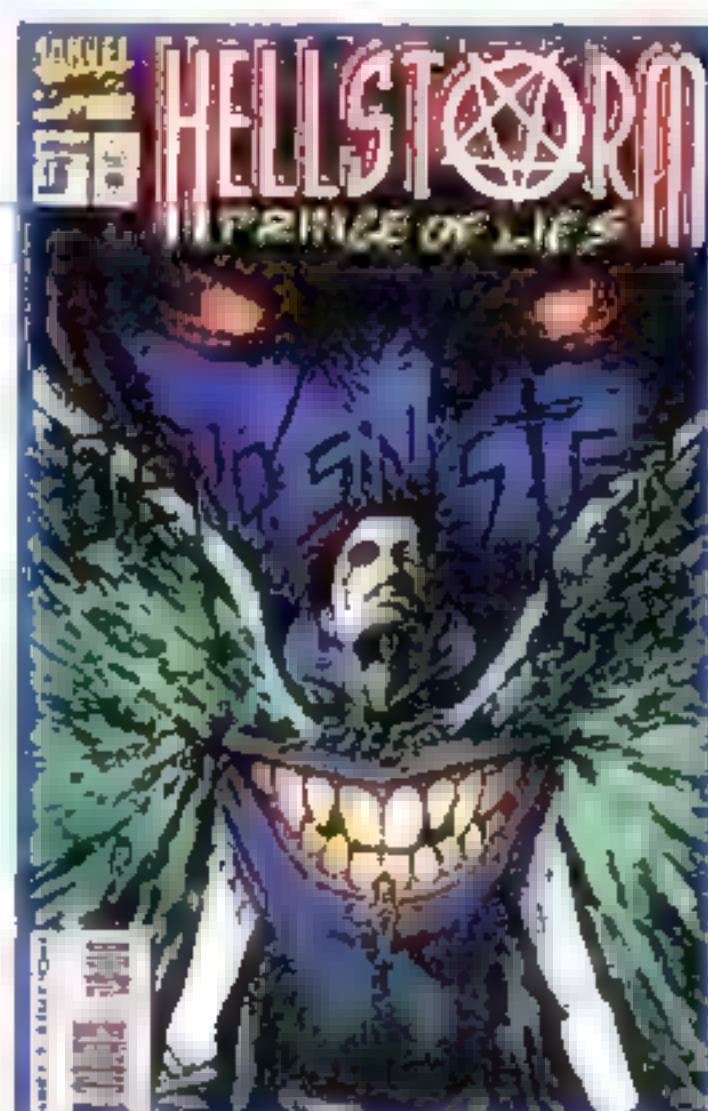


monsters, art deco high tech, circus freaks, alien invaders and much more come together in the snappiest comic book ever made. This year saw Frank Einstein battling mutant beatniks in the streets, renegade robots in the sewers and mysterious killers on the high seas. Allred's art remains deceptively simple, revealing a wealth of detail on second, and even third look, while his composition is just spectacular. For sheer fun, this is still the book to beat.

HELLSTORM

Garth Ennis/Leonardo Manco
Marvel

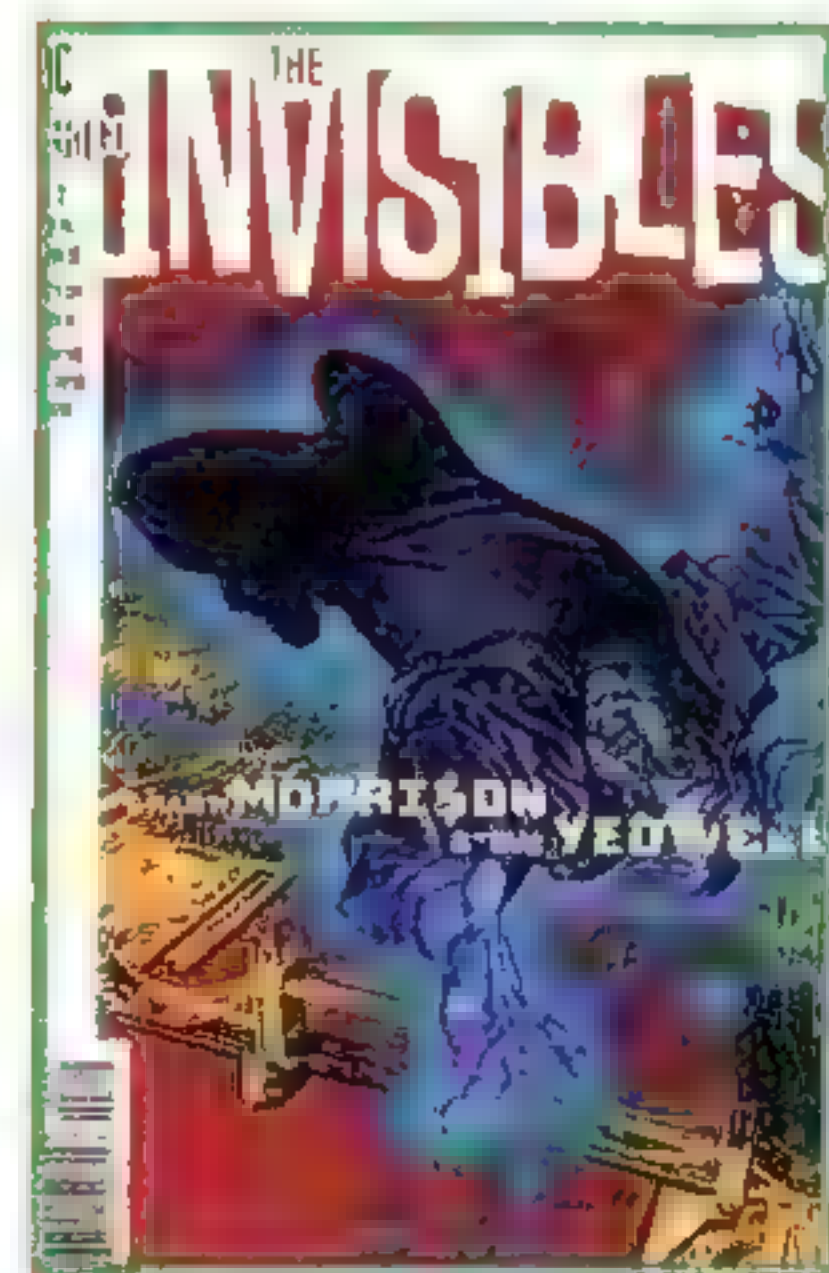
With all the dark books out today, it's easy to see where a title dealing with the king of hell might get overlooked. But *Hellstorm* proved even "grim and gritty" could be done well—in the right hands. Garth Ennis filled the title with wickedly sharp dialogue and a lion's share of intrigue, while Leonardo Manco's art was at once frightening and



charming. *Hellstorm* took names. It took chances. It was cancelled ... but not before gaining a strong following that should follow the creative team over to *Druid*.

THE INVISIBLES

Grant Morrison/Steve Yeowell
DC-Vertigo



Leave it to Grant Morrison to take the notion of societal conformity—indeed, the very existence of cities—and make it part of an occult conspiracy. As a writer whose career has revolved around messing up perceptions, Morrison's really in his element with this creator-owned project, the saga of an obnoxious teenage punk (Dane McGowan) whose anarchic ways place him in the center of a battle between the forces of darkness and light. If these first four issues involved a lot of discovery and exposition, there was still more than enough of Morrison's wild humor to keep things fascinating. (Particularly when one of the Invisibles manages to invoke the spirit of John Lennon for advice, and Lennon—in more or less his own words—gives it to him.) It's easy to suggest that there's more to *Invisibles* than meets the eye. Morrison's puckish enough to suggest that you just need to know how to look.

SANDMAN

Neil Gaiman/Marc Hempel/Various
DC-Vertigo

With 1994's "The Kindly Ones," Neil Gaiman (with the marvelous, distinctive art of Marc Hempel) slowly started pulling together the threads of the tapestry he's been assembling for the last six years. The kidnapping of Lyta Hall's son Daniel set off a series of events that brought in characters from nearly every previous story line (Rose Hunter from "Doll's House," Larissa



from "A Game of You," the various demons and faeries from "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Season of Mists") and set the stage for what looks to be a long and bloody farewell. Over the years, Gaiman's fans have made no secret about which story lines they preferred; with "The Kindly Ones," the author confirms that, in fact, it's all one *big* story line. And what a wonderful story it's been.

FROM HELL

Alan Moore/Eddie Campbell
Mad Love/Kitchen Sink



Technically, Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's *From Hell* is a 16-part miniseries, but as it didn't start or finish this year, we'll refer to it as a work in progress—especially since the words "work" and "progress" still apply. The ongoing saga of Jack the Ripper continued to unfold in grand style this year, as Sir William Gull—whom Moore has theorized is the actual killer—found his obsession with protecting the throne compounded by strange futuristic visions, and more and more, it's been suggested that strange, almost magical forces are at work (a theory helped along by

Alexander Crowley's recent cameo appearance). If there's any magic surrounding *From Hell*, it's more than likely the dark kind. It's certainly the compelling kind.

BONE

Jeff Smith
Cartoon Books

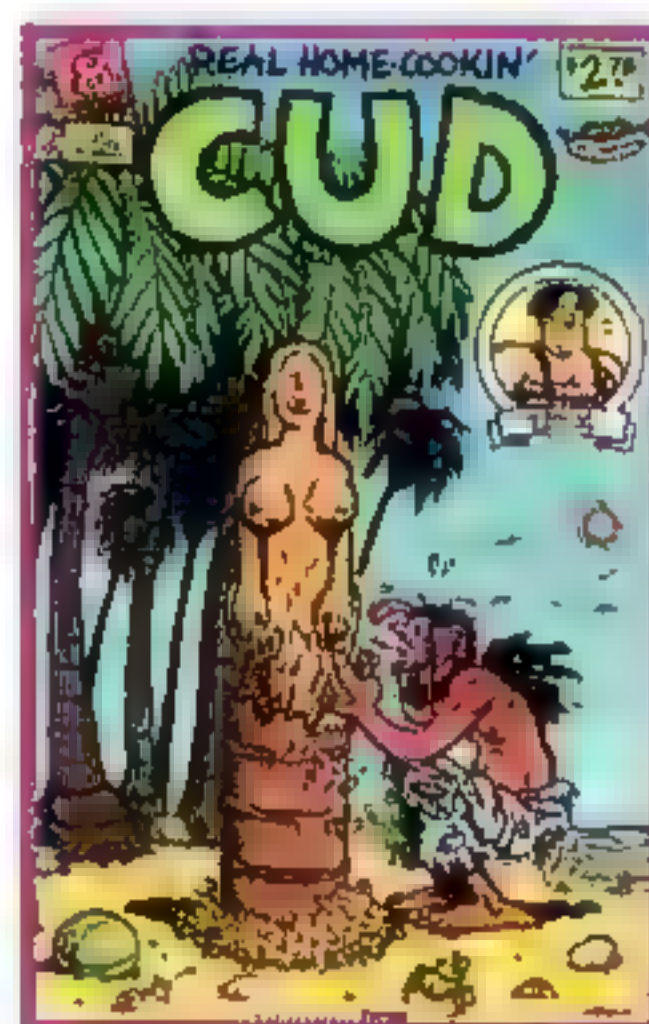


What can be said about *Bone* that hasn't been said already? The past year saw Phoney Bone make the difficult transition to a poultry-based marketplace, the mystery behind Thorn and Fone Bone's dreams intensified and those pesky Rat Creatures reared their ugly gourds yet again. More of the same. The same strong storytelling, consistent charm and humor that readers have come to expect and love about the title. Now in the first issue of '95, the truth behind Thorn's past has been revealed, not only to her but her enemies as well—leaving more questions and more danger than ever before.

CUD

Terry LaBan
Fantagraphics

If LaBan did nothing more than odd-ball stories like "The Owl and The Pussycat" or "Muktuk Wolfsbreath, Hard Boiled Shaman," he'd be acclaimed as some kind of comics alchemist, transplanting one genre's clichés into all-new settings. What made *Cud* especially impressive was the lead story, a scathing Preston



Sturges-like take on Generation X ennui that took performance artist Bob Cudd from commercial highs to personal lows. A marvelously absurd book that deserves a wider audience.

FLASH

Mark Waid/Various
DC



Appropriately, events in *Flash* moved at a breakneck pace throughout 1994. From the introduction of Impulse to the events of "Terminal Velocity," Mark Waid has kept the story completely enthralling. The possibility that the title character might die has popped up not once but *twice*! It's that kind of "anything can happen" feeling that provides *Flash* with a solid foundation and a sense of real suspense that's rare among superhero comics.

CLAN DESTINE

Alan Davis/Mark Farmer
Marvel

In a business—and more specifically, in a genre—that seems intent on proving its "adulthood" to the exclusion of anything resembling joy or enthusiasm, Alan Davis' *Clan Destine* was a sheer delight. The story of a group of super-powered youngsters (who, in a rare twist, start off by moaning about how they aren't allowed to use their powers) forced to fight for their lives is the very definition of a *romp*. It read well, it looked great ... which



TOP 40

is some compensation for the fact that Alan Davis is no longer on the book. What happens next is anybody's guess, but the next person has a very tough act to follow.

XOMBI

John Rozum/J.J. Birch/Noelle Giddings
DC-Milestone

David Kim stumbled into a world of the weird when he found himself involved in the schemes of the maniacal Dr. Sugarman—and he couldn't get out! *Xombi* stands out for its consistently good writing, excellent characterization, quirky humor and strong supporting cast. It's as good as it is bizarre, which when you stop to consider a cast of characters made up of the likes of Boraxis Megatheros, the Nun of Above, Manuel Dexterity and the School of Anquish, that's quite bizarre indeed.



LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

Mark Waid/Tom McCraw/Stuart Immomen/Ron Boyd
DC

LEGIIONNAIRES

Various/Various/Various
DC

Whatever the original intent may have been, *Legion* and *Legionnaires* are two sides of the same post-*Zero Hour* coin. The 30-year history of the Legion was given a touching sense of closure, as the problems that plagued the *Legion* titles in real life were symbolically turned against the heroes, but the true question was "What next?" After a few months of the biweekly Legion tales, it's obvious that the "new" *Legion* has succeeded in its creators' goals: to be faithful to the spirit of the group while still telling exciting new stories.

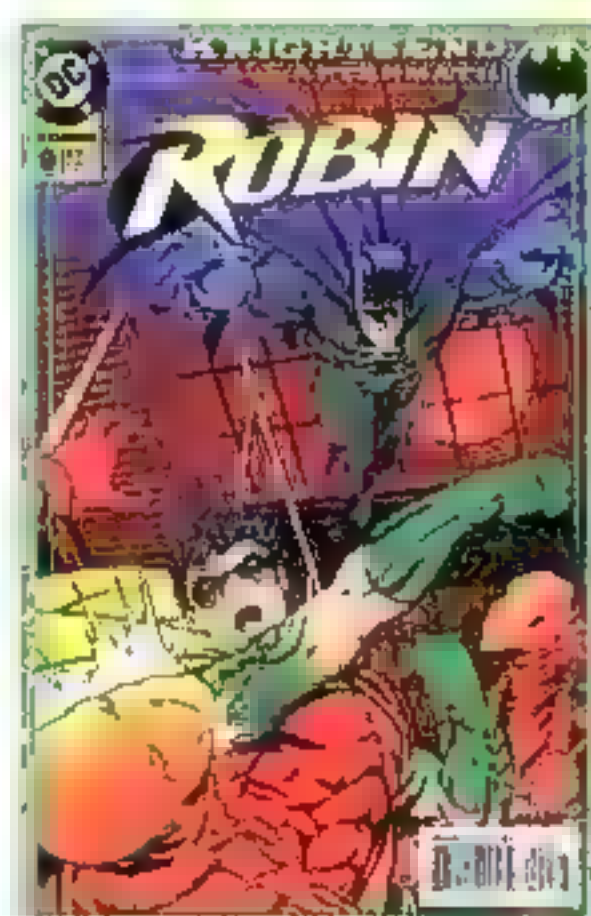
Despite the rapid-fire introduction of dozens of new characters and a high-speed introduction to the new 31st century, readers were quickly acclimated with the new environment and discovered that the characters could thrive there. As a result, the Legion lives on—stronger than before.



ROBIN

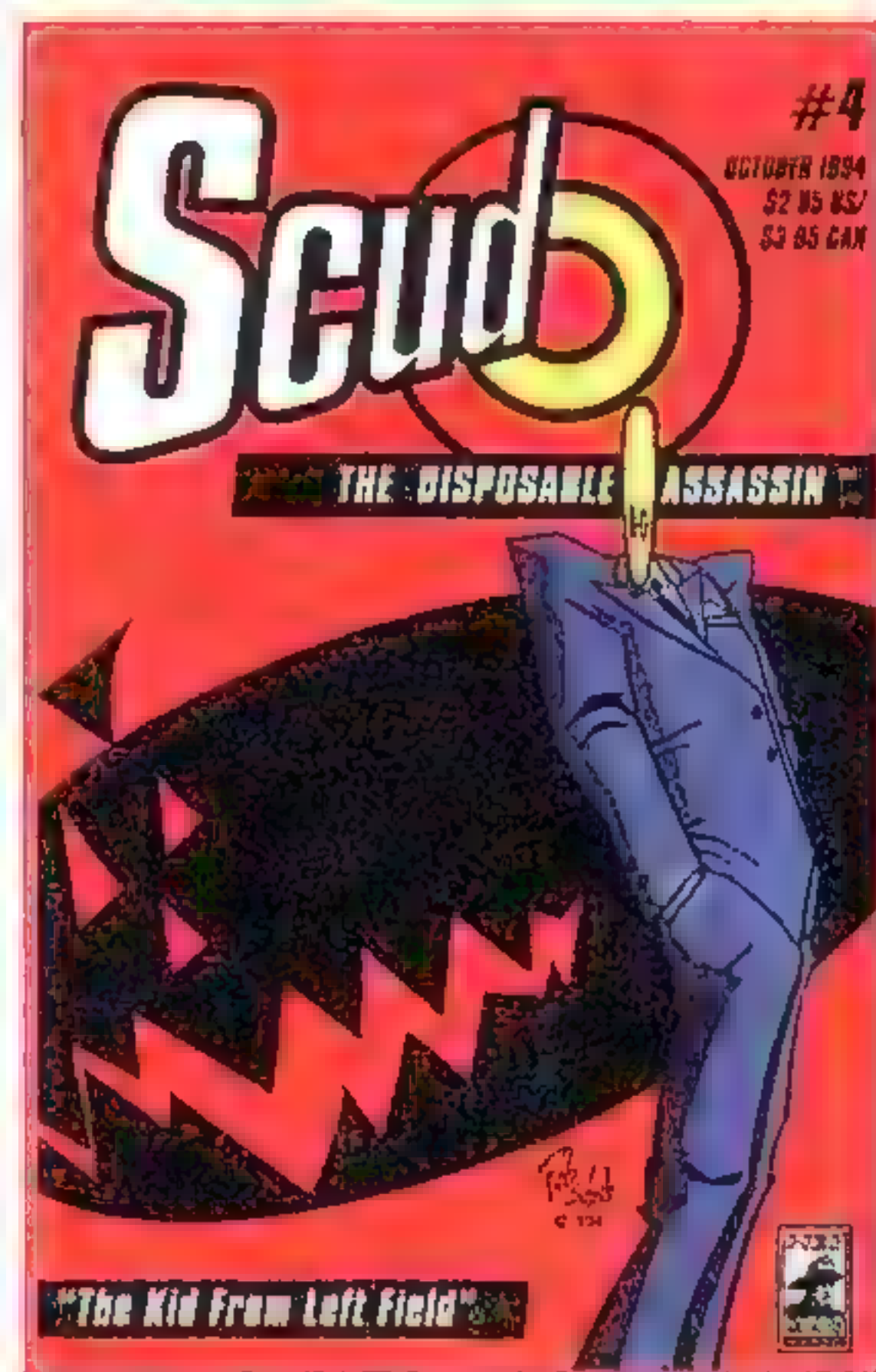
Chuck Dixon/Tom Grummett/
Ray Kryssing
DC

Amidst all the the hubbub of "KnightsEnd" and "Prodigy," *Robin* presented the strongest personality of the Bat-line. Chuck Dixon made the character the focus for this title, instead of headline-grabbing "events." What's especially ironic is the fact that every major transition of the year took place here—including the discussion between Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson that should have taken place years ago. Dixon's writing explained why it hadn't happened sooner.



SCUD, THE DISPOSABLE ASSASSIN

Rob Schrab
Firearm Press



When a disposable robot assassin catches sight of the message, "This unit will self-destruct upon termination of target" on his back, he puts his current mark on life support and goes freelance to pay the hospital bill. It's a universal situation, combining John Woo-style action and humor that can only be described as wacky (or wacked). The book comes off with a sort of kinetic improvised comedy energy—spurred along even further by Schrab's "voice casting" at the start of each issue—and it's deathly funny.

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE

Matt Wagner/Steven T. Seagle/R.G. Taylor/Guy Davis/Vince Locke
DC-Vertigo

As *Sandman Mystery Theatre* began its second year, writer Matt Wagner (and later, co-writer Steven Seagle) went beyond merely updating pulp fiction archetypes by letting them

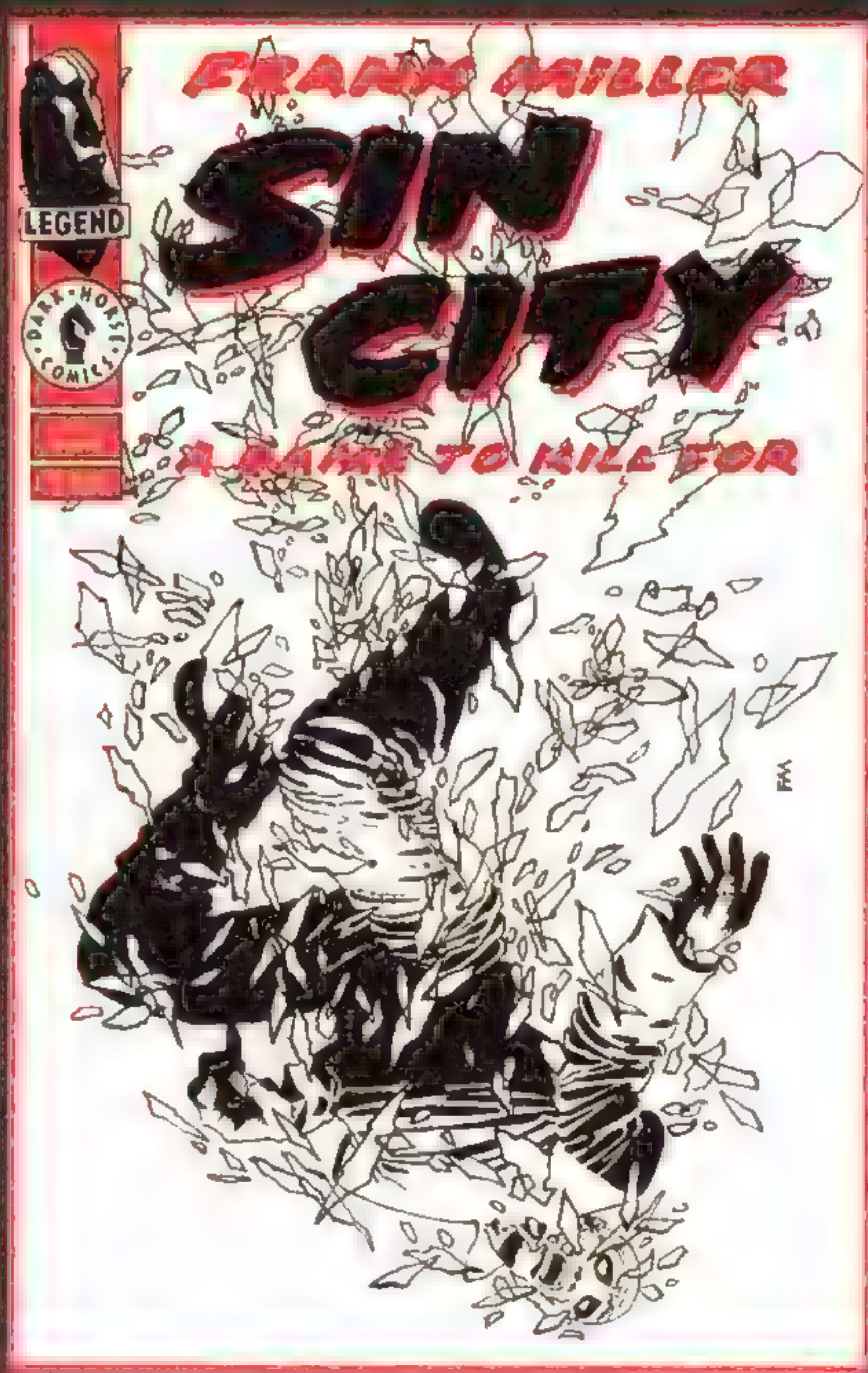


MINISERIES AND ONE-SHOTS:

SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR

Frank Miller
Dark Horse

There are few things nicer to see than a talent like Frank Miller, totally unleashed and allowed to produce something he loves.



KABUKI: FEAR THE REAPER

David Mack
Caliber

Kabuki is a female assassin with a blurred memory and a quest to gain her own identity. That may sound like just about a hundred books out there, but the *Kabuki: Fear the Reaper* one-shot has a few things over the rest: It's beautifully drawn, intelligent, multi-layered, has an original voice and is totally engaging.



THE LONE RANGER & TONTO

Joe R. Lansdale/Tim Truman/
Rick Magyar
Topps

American icons such as Superman and Batman have been updated to fit contemporary standards countless times. The Lone Ranger and his "loyal Indian sidekick," Tonto, were of only a few to be left behind. That is, until Joe R. Lansdale and Tim Truman came along—not only making the duo into three-dimensional characters but doing it in such a damned entertaining way.



MARVELS

Kurt Busiek/Alex Ross
Marvel

We hate to say, "We told you so," but it was brilliant.

JAR OF FOOLS

Jason Lutes
Penny Dreadful

Lutes is only halfway through his story of a down-and-out magician wrestling with the ghost of his brother and the presence of his aging, very alive mentor, but it's one of the most moving, brilliant, memorable single books of the year.

GOLDEN AGE

James Robinson/Paul Smith
DC

Did James Robinson sleep at all in 1994? Not after this book, he didn't. An Elseworlds story about DC's 1940s heroes in a post-War world that served as the only possible successor to *Watchmen*. Smith's beautiful, clean art didn't hurt either.

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swear and produced some genuinely intriguing, occasionally horrifying stories. The turning point for many people was chapter three of "The Brute," where a poverty-stricken father and daughter fell victim to a heroin-smuggling tycoon on one side and a homeless child molester on the other. As the year progressed, Wagner, Seagle and artists Taylor, Davis and Locke spent as much time examining how victims become villains as they did the deepening romance between Wesley Dodds (a.k.a. the Sandman) and Dian Belmont—both of which suggest there are a lot more mysteries here than we might think.

HELLBLAZER

Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon
DC-Vertigo



1994 saw the end of Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon's three-year run on *Hellblazer* with the "Rake at the Gates of Hell" story line. Over the past year Ennis and Dillon crafted some of the best stories in the Vertigo line, featuring characters that come across as complex and human. Whether they're angels, devils, demons or a certain down-at-the-heels, world-weary magician, you feel as if you could pull up a stool, order a pint, and have a natter with them. Not that you would necessarily want to...

LETHARGIC COMICS

Various
Alpha Productions

Meet the winner of this year's Comic Book With The Most In-Jokes In It award. Creators Greg Hyland, Steve Remen, John Migliore, Bob Cram and Brian Lemay apparently read every comic that anyone publishes, and they're especially good at revamping old clichés in (even more) ridiculous contexts. Required reading for anyone who's tired of the industry's propensity for—and embracing of—the often painfully absurd efforts to create "serious" superheroes.



SIN COMICS

Jay Stephens
Black Eye

ATOMIC CITY TALES

Jay Stephens
Black Eye

One of the bright spots of the year was the return (albeit a brief one) of Jay Stephens' *Sin*. Stephens wisely opted not to attempt to duplicate the freewheeling, stream-of-consciousness narrative of the book's original run, opting instead for a

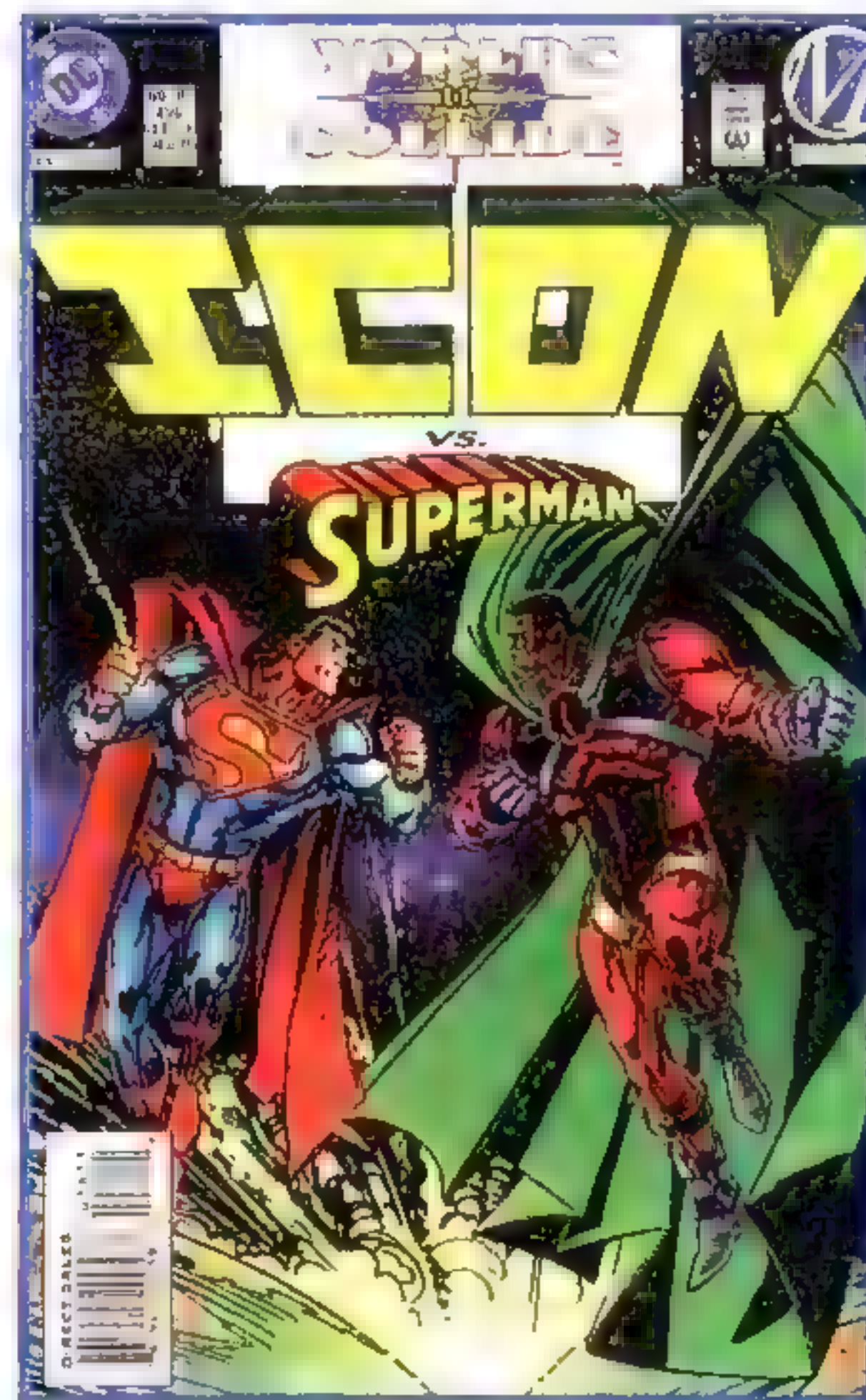


series of interweaving stories that centered around a drum-playing, meditating musician who became the ultra-powerful Big Bang. With that move, Stephens paced the transition to *Atomic City Tales*, where Big Bang played Superman and his friends—including cartoonist Jay Stephens (!!)—tagged along for the ride. Both books were quirky and yet easily accessible. If Stephens has many more books in him—and he's suggested that he has—we're all in for a treat.

ICON

Dwayne McDuffie/M.D. Bright/Mike Gustovich
DC-Milestone

Since its start three years ago, *Icon* has become an excellent title, full of strong storytelling and characterization. The book took on a strange, poignant finality to it in *Icon* #21, as our hero tied up his affairs on Earth before leaving for his home planet, leaving his companion Raquel to find a new icon in which people could place their trust. Anyone still thinking of *Icon* as a "black Superman" title at this late point in the game should really try reading the book.



RARE-BIT FIENDS

Rick Veitch
King Hell

On the surface, *Rare-Bit Fiends* is the comic book equivalent of *Seinfeld*. It's not about anything in particular. A deeper look reveals a rollicking ride through the mysterious subconscious

world, the likes of which comic book audiences haven't seen since Winsor McCay's *Dreams of The Rare-Bit Fiends*. In the course of an issue, Roarin' Rick was likely to go from palling around with Dave Sim or Stephen Bissette to revisiting his father's death bed, to ... well, who *knows* where. If anyone sat down and tried to create these books, it would probably look forced and self-conscious; in Veitch's hands, it's a previously forbidden territory come to strange life.



the industry, and no one really compares the mucho strango art of Sam Kieth. Yay for big feet!

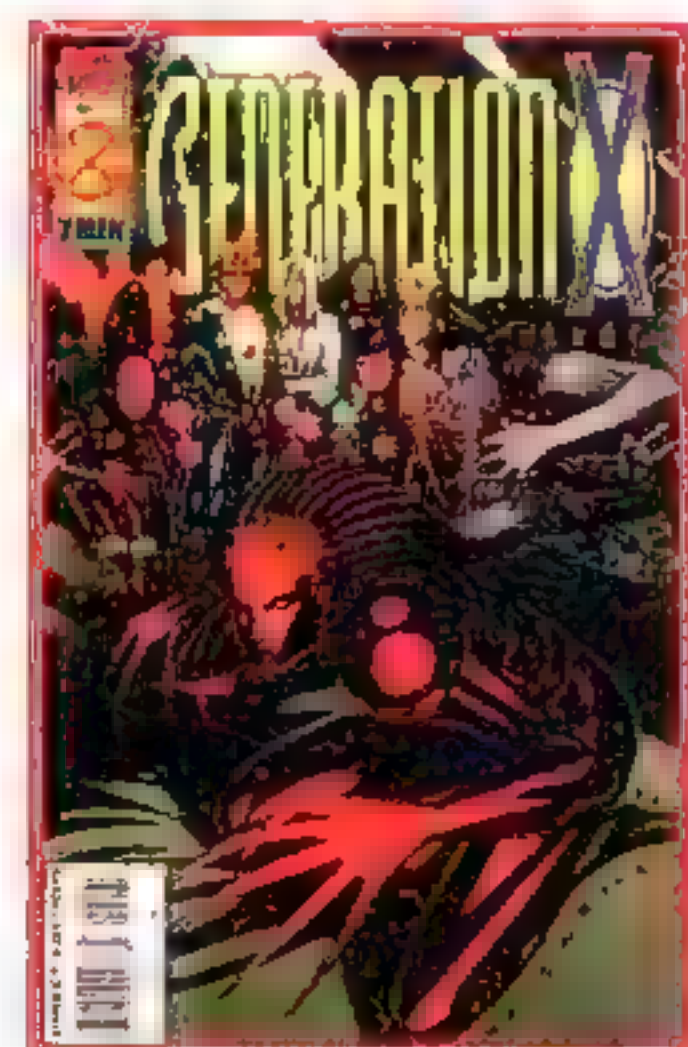


GENERATION X

Scott Lobdell/Chris Bachalo/Mark Buckingham
Marvel

Scott Lobdell has introduced an interesting new batch of students for Charles Xavier's School, who succeed where *The New Mutants* often failed by being genuinely intriguing. This title has only been around for a few months, but Lobdell's already provided a sense for who the characters are

... while still leaving enough open for questions. Bachalo's art is definitely away from the X-book standard (that is, he doesn't try to draw like Jim Lee) and his own style creates a new and original atmosphere for the book.



THE MAXX

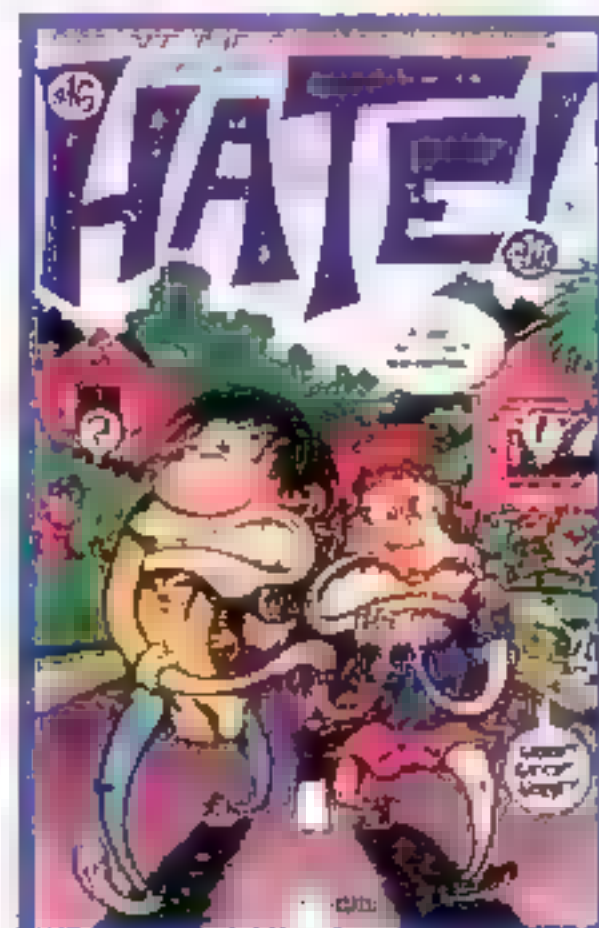
Sam Kieth/William Messner-Loebs
Image

It's about a superhero, sort of, who lives out of a dumpster. It's about confronting fears and uncovering repressed evils. Best of all, it's visually and intellectually complex while still being simply entertaining (helped along by the occasional homage to Dr. Seuss), which is quite amazing if you think about it—since who or what the main characters are is *still* hazy. Messner-Loebs reasserts suspicions that he's one of the best scripters in

HATE

Peter Bagge/Jim Blanchard
Fantagraphics

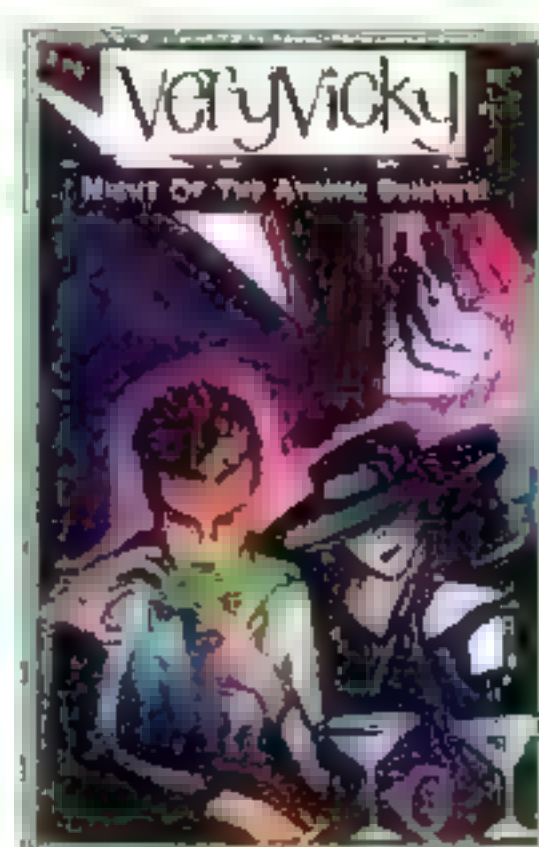
This year, Peter Bagge's *Hate* went full-circle and grew at the same time, as Bagge—no doubt realizing that the sudden trendiness of the Seattle scene (as well as the sudden trendiness of mocking it)—took Buddy Bradley and supremely dysfunctional girlfriend Lisa back to Buddy's family in New Jersey. With the transition in *Hate* #16, Bagge proved he was no mere one-joke cartoonist. By the way, this was the year Fantagraphics proved they can do books in color, and do them pretty well.



VERY VICKY

John Mitchell/Jana Christy
Meet Danny Ocean

The comic book medium has existed for at least 60 years, yet *Very Vicky* is the first book to combine (shaken, not stirred) the silly situations of beach movies, the attitude of Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack and the ultra-cool repartee of an Ernst Lubitsch film



and topped off with a dollop of outrageousness worthy of Luis Bunuel or Screamin' Jay Hawkins. What the hell does *that* tell us? Somewhere in the time-space continuum, there's a parallel universe where teenagers sip Martinis, Shriners are hell-raising nemeses and God comes down to pass judgment at a birthday party. For the time being, *Very Vicky* is as close to that as you're likely to get. Go for it.



TYRANT

Stephen Bissette
Spider Baby Graftix & Publications

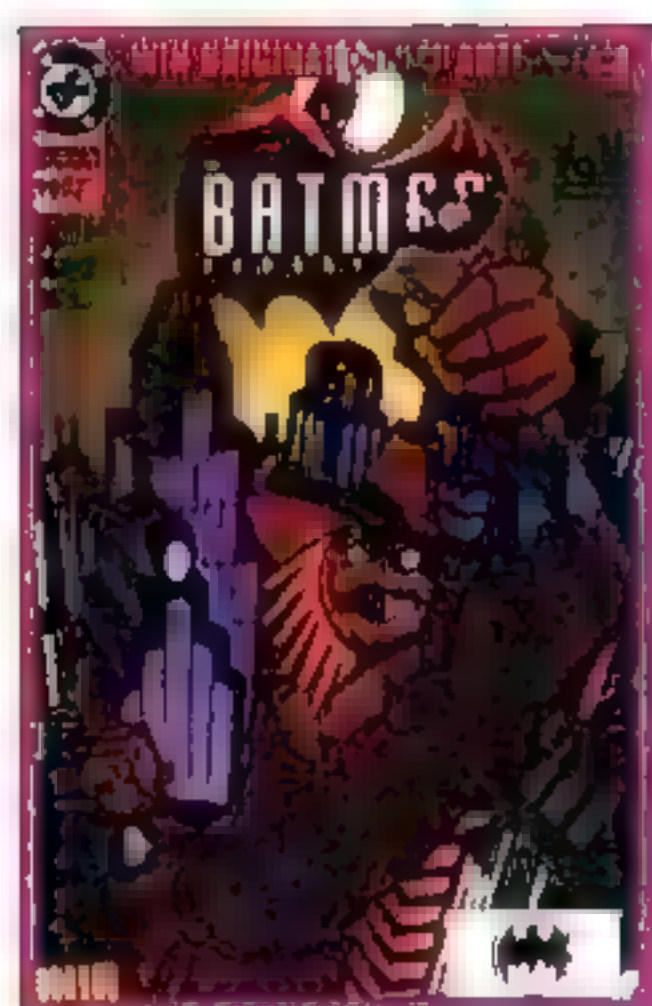
Recipe for a strange and powerful comic: Take one brilliant artist/writer/publisher, add a monomaniacal obsession with dinosaurs, let simmer for several years. The result: *Tyrant*, a chronicle of the life and times of a Tyrannosaurus Rex from the egg to the tar pits. With the possible exception of *From Hell*, this may be the most extensively researched comic book of all time, and the dedication and love of subject matter shows in every single page.

BATMAN ADVENTURES

Kelley Puckett/Mike Parobeck
DC

Remember how reading comics used to be? For each comic you bought there was a complete story; you didn't have to buy five other titles just to figure out what was going on.

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The hero was basically a decent guy. Conflicted maybe, but he didn't brood on for page after page. Every month the hero would figure out the villain's fiendish plot

and beat him up. Not kill, maim or mutilate, just knock him out. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Yet Batman had to have the grim and gritty filtered out of him through an animated series before *Batman Adventures* became possible. Kelly Puckett's writing pushed all the buttons that made the Bat-characters so much fun in the first place and infuses them with more energy than you would have thought possible in only 22 pages. Mike Parobeck gives proof in every issue that less is more, with clean, simple lines and brilliant storytelling. Here's hoping that more books get the "Adventures" treatment.

DR. STRANGE

David Quinn/Peter Gross/Various Marvel

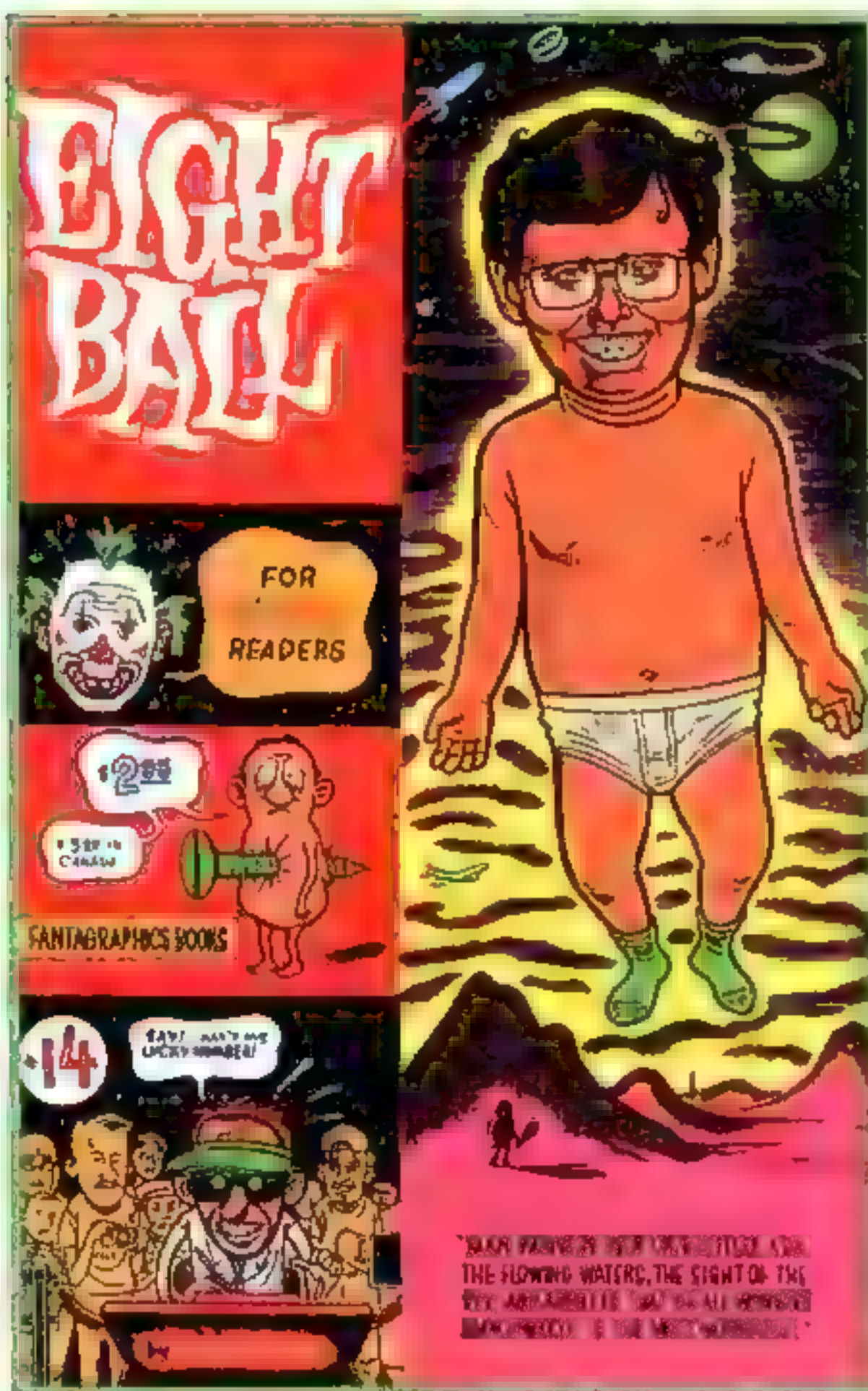
David Quinn isn't letting Dr. Strange simply contort his fingers to make magic anymore, now he has to *work* for it. He's re-creating the entire shape of Dr. Strange's magic, as well as the character. Rather than devote a



specific issue to a "new Dr. Strange," Quinn spent all of 1994 prepping him for internal and external changes. Furthermore, Quinn avoided the tired "everything-you-know-about-the-character-is-wrong" back-door approach in favor of character development to move Strange toward his next level. Peter Gross's art is the most interesting the title has seen in years and succeeds in making the magical aspects of the book actually seem ... arcane.

EIGHTBALL

Daniel Clowes Fantagraphics



Year in, year out, *Eightball* remains one of comicdom's most disturbing books. Dan Clowes' special brand of darkness is a million light years removed from most comics that claim that label—and with "The Death of Dan Pussey," he tells us what we've always been afraid to admit: That all the "hot" superhero artists and writers in the world will someday end up in the exact same place—six feet under. As always, Clowes' greatest strength remains his ability to induce laughter, even when you're pondering whether or not it's appropriate.

WARRIOR

Beau Smith/Mitch Byrd DC

Who thought such a thoroughly unlikeable character could be made interesting? Beau Smith and Mitch Byrd pulled off what must have been the least sought-after job in comics, taking a character who'd spent too

long as a shallow brute and giving him a dose of John Wayne grit and Indiana Jones attitude. Along the way, Smith and Byrd did more than demonstrate that there was more to Guy than anyone suspected—they made the title genuinely fun as well. Big changes occurred to the character over the last year (one of those rare DC books that actually made use out of *Zero Hour*), but it was Smith's writing and Byrd's art that really made the book stand out.



SUPERBOY

Karl Kesel/Tom Grummett/Doug Hazlewood DC

There have been a plethora of teenage heroes in comics; with very few exceptions, most of them have acted like grown-up heroes who just happened to have acne. Thanks to writer Karl Kesel (and no doubt the guiding hand of editor Mike Carlin), *Superboy* proved a glorious exception to that rule. The lead character is a total goof (witness *Superboy* #0, when our hormonally active hero discovers he's got X-Ray vision), and the end result is a book that's simply and thoroughly entertaining. If you want angst, go read *Spider-Man*. For something fun, this is the book.



UNCANNY X-MEN

Scott Lobdell/Mark Waid/John Romita, Jr./Joe Madureira Marvel

Scott Lobdell's roller-coaster ride approach to the *Uncanny X-Men* this year had many fans comparing his work to that of predecessor Chris Claremont. There's a certain amount of truth in that: Both writers liked to make the



readers intimate with the public and private moments of each team member; it's been a joy to see the older members in particular (e.g., Iceman and Archangel) come out of ruts that were long thought intractable. Fans also learned to look forward to "aftermath" issues—the follow-ups to big events—because Lobdell avoided straight filler, using the opportunity to make the group more than ciphers with foreign accents and exploring the impact these events had on his characters.

WILD C.A.T.s

Jim Lee/Brandon Choi/James Robinson/Travis Charest
Image

During the brunt of '94, Jim Lee and Brandon Choi delivered decent superhero fare, but what made *WildC.A.T.s* especially noteworthy this year was a two-issue stint by writer James Robinson and artist Travis Charest. The team's Black Razor story line delved into characters whose presence had arguably been pretty light and fleshed them out to the point where they were even more interesting than the main cast. Charest's pencils, meanwhile, delivered action reminiscent of classic film. This run may prove to be a tough act to follow.



CEREBUS

Dave Sim/Gerhard Aardvark-Vanaheim

At the end of *Cerebus* #185, Dave Sim prepared to wrap up book three of "Mothers and Daughters" by stating (using the persona of Viktor Davis) "Just one more ... Issue 186. And then," he added, "We each go our separate ways." Sim seemed intent on using his text pieces as a defiant declaration of independence from the preconceptions of his audience, but when his manifesto concluded with a lengthy discourse on "The Male Light" and "The Female Void," he turned *Cerebus* #186 into one of the year's most talked-about books (dragging



Jeff Smith, Neil Gaiman and Alan Moore into the story may have thrown additional fuel on the fire). If Sim was, in fact, saying, "I'm trying to work here. Leave me alone," he could hardly have said it with more finality than this. Those of you who weren't aware about Sim's musings on the sexes (or didn't care much either way) will be happy to know that as a storyteller, he's still well on top of his game.

FIREARM

James Robinson/Gary Erskine/Cully Hamner/Ben Herrera
Malibu



It looks as though 1994 was James Robinson's year, between *Starman*, *WildC.A.T.s* and—if you can look through the mainstream borderline-superhero comic book trappings—this look inside the mind and life of the remarkable Alec Swan, British expatriot and ex-secret agent. Robinson makes the character more tangible than the usual hired gun by providing him with a love of things (chocolate hob-nobs, Tetley's tea, old neon signs), books (by Damon Runyon, Raymond Chandler, Mervyn Peake) and places (from Pasadena to Seattle to "sad, gray" London). The result is an engaging mix of the everyday and the fantastic and one of the most readable comics on the shelves.

SWAMP THING

Mark Millar/Philip Hester
DC-Vertigo
Mark Millar and Philip Hester came to *Swamp Thing* after Nancy Collins

and Scot Eaton had taken the character as far as seemed possible (and considering Alan Moore used to write this book, that's saying something). So Millar and Hester (with a little help from Grant Morrison)

tore into the character's history with a vengeance. The series since then has seen the return of Linda Holland and Sargon the Sorcerer, and has introduced the Parliament of Stones and the Hooded Man. Now that the dust has settled, it seems as if the founding father of the Vertigo line is back to his roots (no pun intended), in weird and compelling adventures out on the bayou.



SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN

Peter Milligan/Various
DC-Vertigo

Somewhere along the line in 1994, *Shade* went from being a good, entertaining book to being a *great* book. Peter Milligan hit his stride in a big way, as *Shade* went from battling 17th-century witch-hunters to cutting a deal with the devil in order to save his baby from the angels. ("Sometimes it's best not to think about the consequences of your actions," the narration added ominously.) For all its madness, however, Milligan made the book a story about people first and



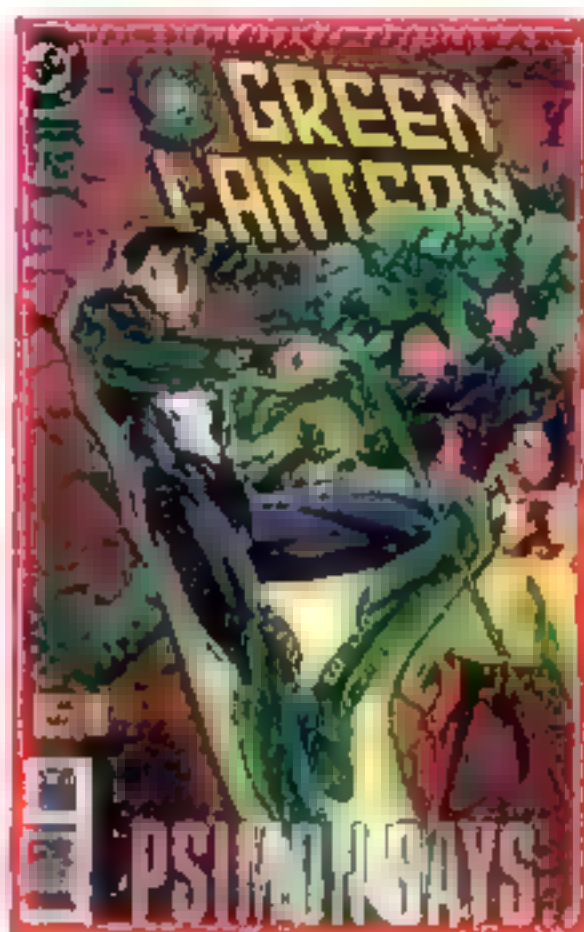
TOP 40 OF

foremost. That's why he was able to make the death of Shade's lover Kathy (and Shade's subsequent desperate withdrawal from the world) so genuinely moving. He was helped immeasurably by artists Chris Bachalo (who left after issue #50 to work wonders with *Generation X*), Sean Phillips and Mark Buckingham.

GREEN LANTERN

Ron Marz/Darryl Banks
DC

The transformation of Hal Jordan from well-intentioned hero to crazed would-be overlord had fans alternatively impressed and appalled. For all that brouhaha, the debut of Kyle Rayner as the new Green Lantern was comparatively overlooked—which was too bad, as writer Ron Marz and artist Darryl Banks skillfully displayed the perks of a young creative type wielding a power ring. If the tragedy got piled on a bit thick sometimes, well, maybe that can be chalked up to growing pains. What's more interesting is that Marz, Banks and editor Kevin Dooley took a chance for better or worse. With Kyle Rayner, the signs point to better.



PITT

Dale Keown
Image

After an uncertain beginning, *Pitt* found a regular schedule in 1994 beginning with a showdown with his

ultimately evil test-tube father, Zoyvod. Things got crazier from there: As Pitt's link to Earth lay in a coma (guarded by Jareb), a group of law-abiding alien superheroes tried (unsuccessfully) to work with the loner behemoth to protect the boy. Timmy's abduction led Pitt and his friends to the North Pole for a long-dreaded family reunion. Short on words, but never on action, Keown's explosive artwork alone makes *Pitt* worth a look, and the suspense that's been building up in the plots and subplots throughout the year made it a must-read.



THE SPECTRE

John Ostrander/Tom Mandrake
DC

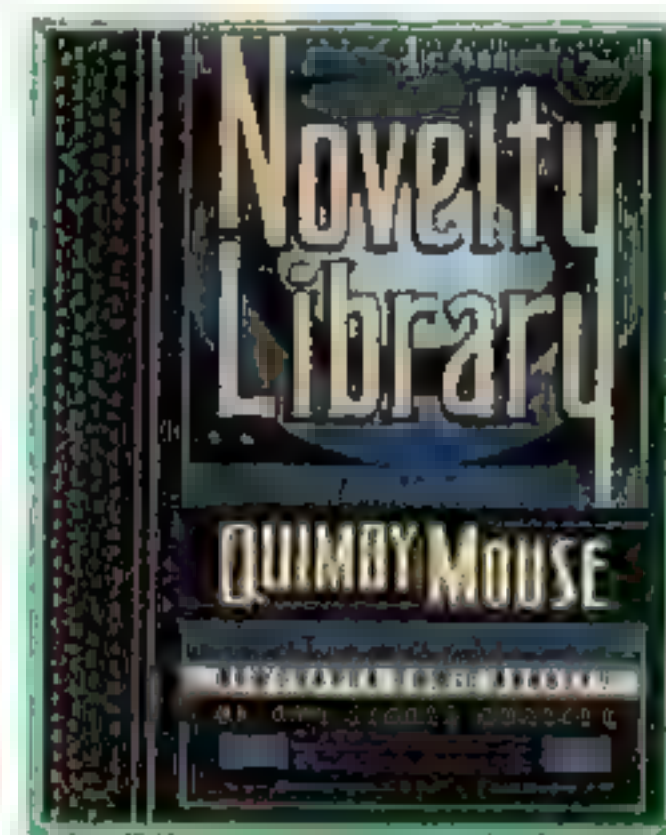
There've been several failed attempts at housing the Spectre in a monthly series over years, but it took the team of John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake to finally do it. Ostrander managed to find a happy median between depowering the Spectre into just another cape and having him clock his foes by chucking planets, thus accomplishing the most important part: making the character interesting. And while paying homage to earlier Spectre continuity (such as place in the Justice Society of America), Ostrander moved the character off into new territory, such as exploring his origins and the theological implications behind his existence. In a nutshell, anyone who can make a comic featuring the wrath of god without having it come off like either *Ghost Rider* or an old Spire Christian comic deserves a tip of the hat for their efforts.



ACME NOVELTY LIBRARY

Chris Ware
Fantagraphics

Chris Ware is one of the most remarkable artists working in comics. His art has a charm that's reminiscent of another age (especially the oval-headed Jimmy Corrigan, the smartest boy on Earth), but his stories are gripping and unsettling, his characters pathetic in a way that's obvious to everyone except the characters themselves. Even the occasional forays into cartoon-style injury are as painful as they are comical. Combine this with text pieces that parody the archaic writing style of magazines from the '20s and '30s and you've got that rare bird: a comic book, fully conceived from start to finish, that actually works as a package.



STRANGERS IN PARADISE

Terry Moore
Abstract Studios

It would have been easy for Terry Moore to continue doing *Strangers in Paradise* in the same style as the miniseries, relying on the situational humor that helped make it such a hit. The opening pages of the first issue maintain that feel, with the tough-spirited Katchoo playing mind-games with some poor, poor slob. By the close of issue #1, Terry Moore did a 360-degree turn and drove the series into a very serious direction involving Katchoo's mysterious past and the death of a friend. Since then, *SiP* has run the gamut from slapstick comedy to quiet conversation, ominous suspense to heartfelt friendship. Kind of like real life.



GHOST RIDER 2099

Len Kaminski/Various
Marvel

In '94, *Ghost Rider 2099* proved that not only can cyberpunk be done well, it can be done well in comics.

Zero Cochrane lost his life and found his consciousness residing in a high-tech war-bot, giving him the power to finally take on the corrupt system he'd always despised. Chris Bachalo, Mark



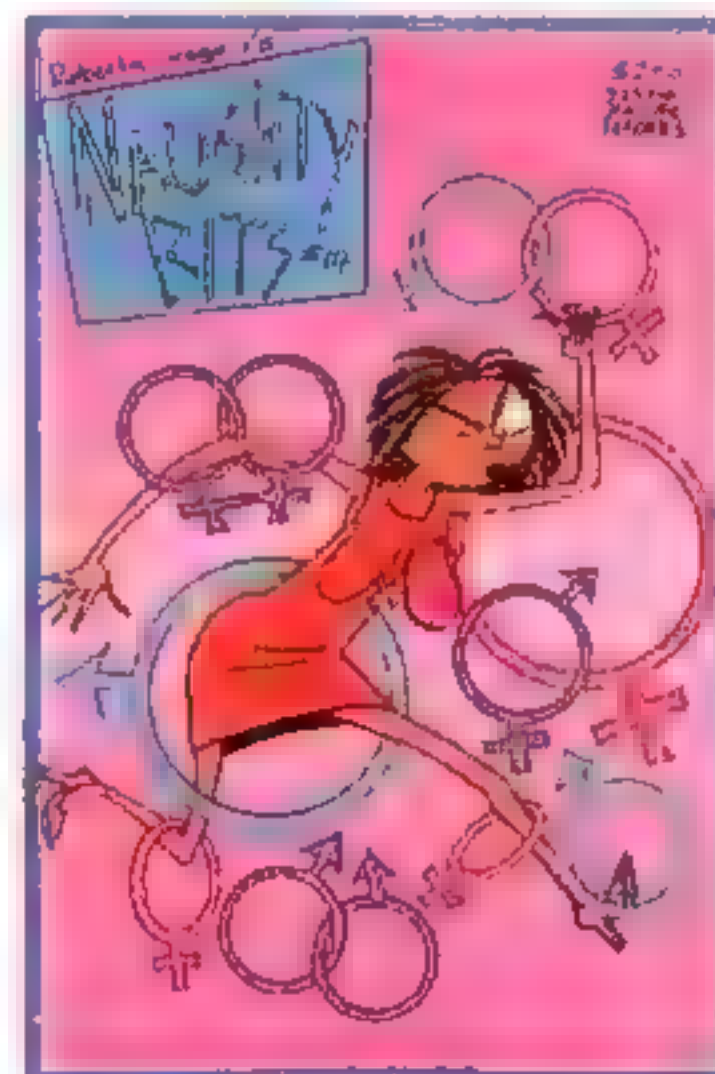
Buckingham and Kyle Hotz's art worked superbly to suit Len Kaminski's scripts with a dark futuristic mood. And thank heavens, it had nothing to do with the old Ghost Rider!

NAUGHTY BITS

Roberta Gregory
Fantagraphics

This year saw Bitchy Bitch—probably *the* most uptight woman in comics—take a free vacation south of the border and return to find her new co-worker is an old high school acquaintance, whose sexual orientation set off a firestorm of controversy at the office. Along the way, Bitchy Bitch mulled over life's various terrors: that someone might stalk her; that someone might *not* stalk her; that her co-worker would make a pass at her; that the people at her office were

backwater morons; that they would think *she* was lesbian for talking to a lesbian ... well, you get the idea. Gregory has managed to create a character whose hatreds are desperate, pathetic and all too common. In prose, Roberta Gregory's narratorial intrusions might seem bulky. In film, she'd might come off as some bizarre feminist Crypt-Keeper. In comics, it works perfectly. She's totally at home in the medium and is consistently able to tell wonderful and unique stories.



GRAPHIC NOVELS

THE POWER OF SHAZAM!

Jerry Ordway
DC

After some of the appalling treatments the World's Mightiest Mortal has gotten in the name of "updating," it was darn near enchanting to see Jerry Ordway treat Captain Marvel and his supporting cast with some genuine affection, not as unfortunate accouterments that got in the way.

OUR CANCER YEAR

Harvey Pekar/Joyce Brabner/Frank Stack

Four Walls Eight Windows

An entrancing, harrowing, unblinking examination of how Harvey Pekar's lymphoma affected the lives of himself and especially his wife. You'll be left wondering who suffered more.

THE WILD PARTY

Art Spiegelman
Pantheon

Art Spiegelman revives the classic Joseph Moncuse March poem of

decadence with an unerring eye that brings every seedy detail into plain view.

MR. PUNCH

Neil Gaiman/Dave McKean
DC/Vertigo

A sequel of a sorts to the duo's earlier *Violent Cases*, *Mr. Punch* takes the stuff of children's amusement and gives it a decidedly terrifying, mysterious edge.

THE MYSTERY PLAY

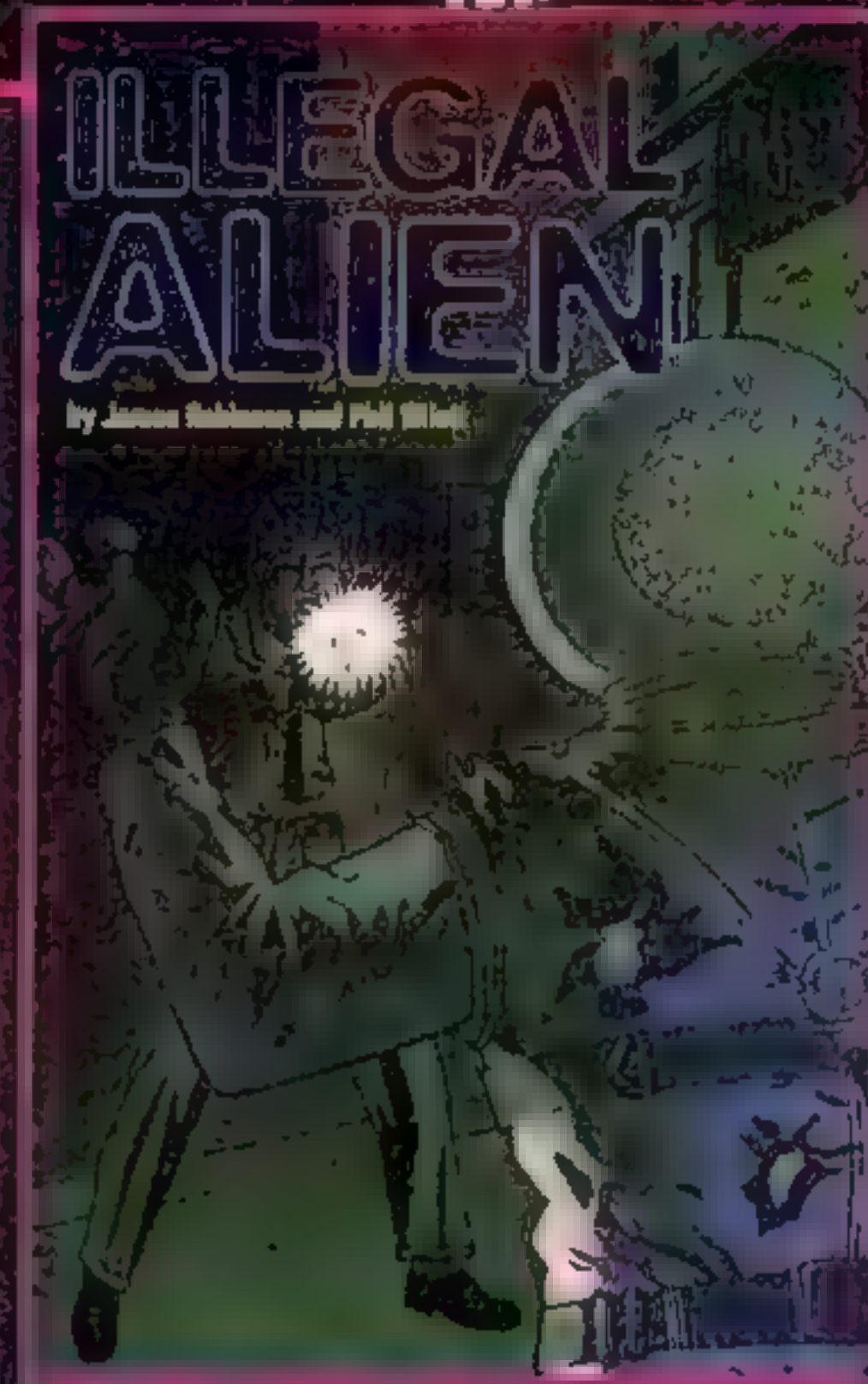
Grant Morrison/Jon J. Muth
DC/Vertigo

A fascinating trifle in which the murder of an actor is not all it seems. Morrison's script is fascinating and Muth's painted art is extraordinary.

ILLEGAL ALIEN

James Robinson/Phil Elliott
Slave Labor

A weird, wonderful mixture of 1950s cultures. Cold War-paranoia, small-time hit men and aliens from outer space converge in England. Gently, delightfully absurd.



THE RAY

Christopher Priest/Howard
Porter/Robert Jones
DC

Internal monologue is nothing new for comics; the lead character has provided a running commentary for many stories throughout the years. But Christopher Priest seemed particularly skilled at using this device in 1994's *The Ray*. Through Ray's struggle to create a normal life, his infatuation with Black Canary and his disastrous relationship with his father, the readers understand the character all the better—because the character's thoughts are explained in a way that anyone who's ever been young and overwhelmed by their surroundings can relate to easily.



PALOOKAVILLE

Seth
Drawn & Quarterly

In a year when his Drawn & Quarterly brethren (Chester Brown, Joe Matt) decided they'd pretty much had it with autobiographical stories, Seth came along with "It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken." Ostensibly the story of the author's fascination for a little-known *New Yorker* cartoonist, Seth turned his particular obsession into a greater study of how we yearn for the past while simultaneously distancing ourselves from it. It's a genuinely sweet, touching story (helped along considerably by Seth's own *New Yorker*-inspired artwork) that proves how beauty can still come from the truth.



topics, *Blood Syndicate* deals with issues like racism, drugs and violence as realities of life that can't be resolved within the constraints of a single issue. The group isn't actually your clichéd "super team," it's a gang, and one that has to deal with the problems that face people in the world today. *Blood Syndicate* shows how a diverse group of people would realistically operate as a team—and perhaps best yet, without coming off like *Real World*-inspired tripe.



THE INCREDIBLE HULK

Peter David/Gary Frank
Marvel

Some comic books specialize in sweeping, epic tales that take the reader to alien worlds and feature titanic battles. Others offer smaller, more personal stories that develop characters. Very few writers are able to do both, but Peter David proved time and again in 1994 that he could. With stories that range from the "Troyan War" to the marriage of Rick Jones and Marlo to the death of Jim Wilson, he offers drama, humor, action and always something to think about. For anyone who has ever argued that the superhero genre has reached its limits and has no new stories to tell, just go pick up a copy of *The Incredible Hulk* and prepare to be surprised.



SUPERMAN

Dan Jurgens
DC

Since his return to the world of the living, there's been no flies on the Man of Steel. Supes has been everywhere and done everything from catching ordinary scumbags to cosmic no-goodniks, including a rematch with Bizarro. The only thing he hasn't been able to do is get a decent haircut, but as we all know, with great power comes great responsibility, and haircuts are often put on the back-burner when there are people and planets to save. In a nutshell, 1994 was business as usual for the Man of Steel's flagship title—and thanks to Dan Jurgens, business is good.



BLOOD SYNDICATE

Ivan Velez/ChrisCross/Quijano
Milestone-DC

Instead of the average heavy handed comic book approach to serious

FLAMING CARROT COMICS

Bob Burden
Dark Horse

Bob Burden's wacked-out *dada* love child, The Flaming Carrot, remains perfect for any year. Last year saw only one issue of *FC*, but it was the year's most successful crossover. Herbie (the lollipop-sucking *wunderkid* of the 1960s) and the Carrot traveled back in time to find if Will Shakespeare actually wrote all those sonnets and plays (and if he didn't, who did? The answer will *truly* surprise you). It was so funny that you should take a break from reading this and go check it out right now. ▲



READER ART!

ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER
HUGE PILE OF READER ART
ON *HERO'S* DESK. WHAT
TO DO WITH IT? SEND IT
RIGHT BACK AT YA, OF
COURSE! HERE'S A SAM-
PLING OF THE OFTEN
WILD, OFTEN WONDERFUL
WORK WE RECEIVED.
THESE PAGES ARE FAR
FROM THE *ONLY* EXAM-
PLES OF OUR READERS'
TALENTS, BUT THEY
SHOULD PROVE OUR POINT
IN A MOST ENTERTAINING
WAY. ENJOY...

HERO

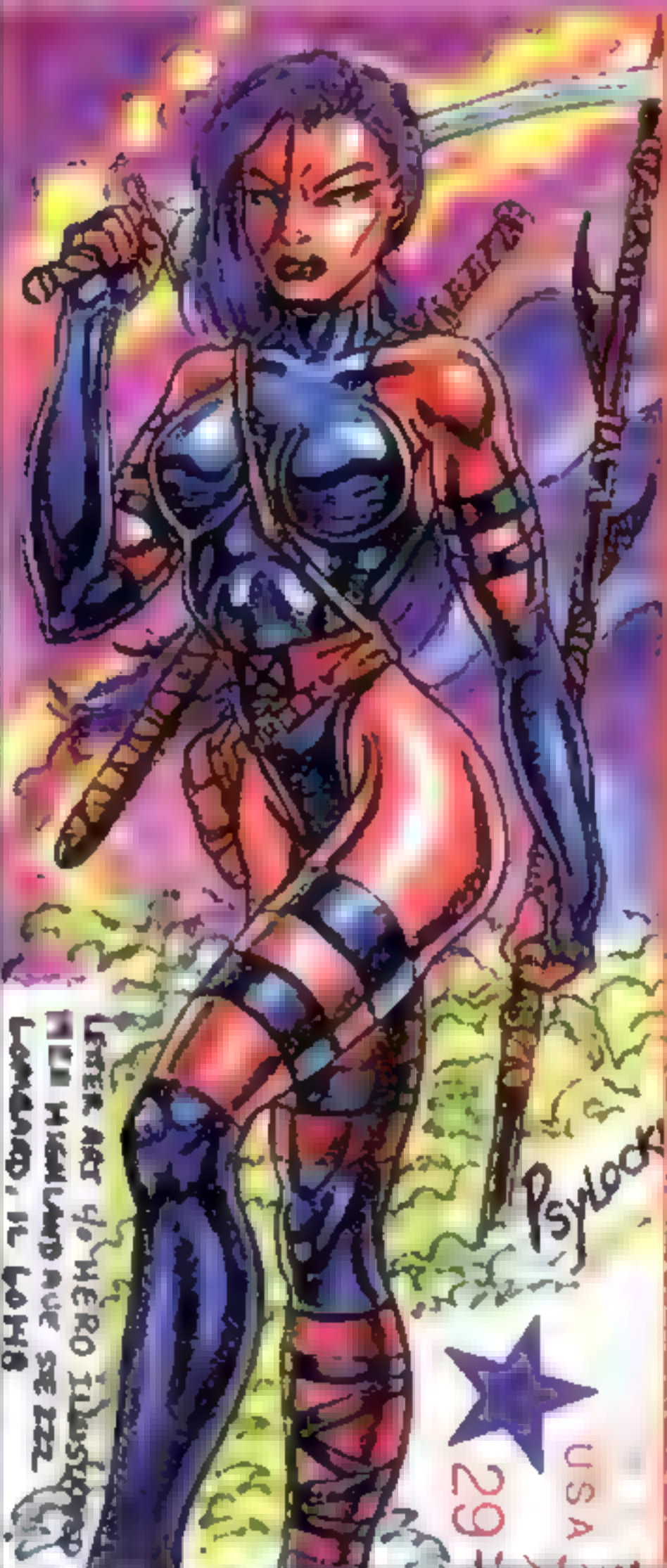
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FRANK CARPENTER
CHINA GROVE, NC

LETTER ART
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LOMBARD, IL 60148

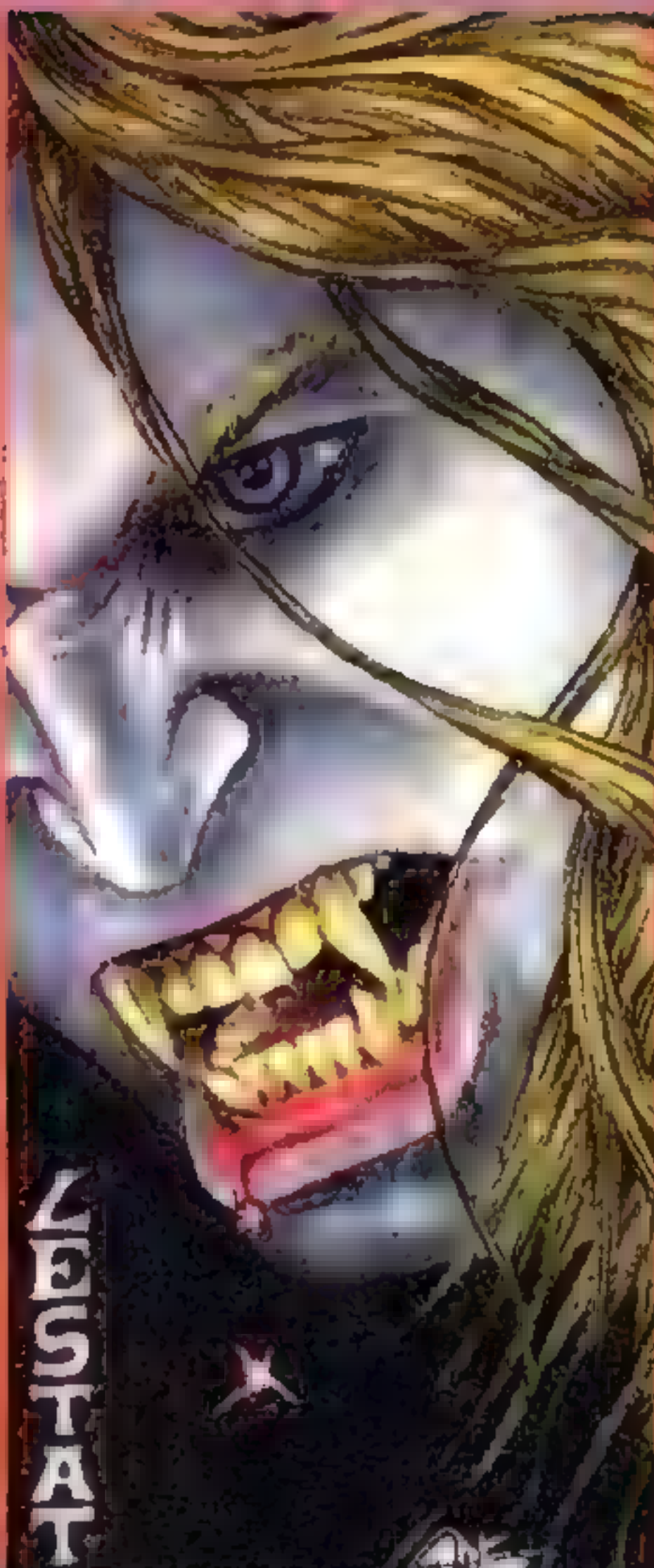
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Psylocke

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USA
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JUSTICE



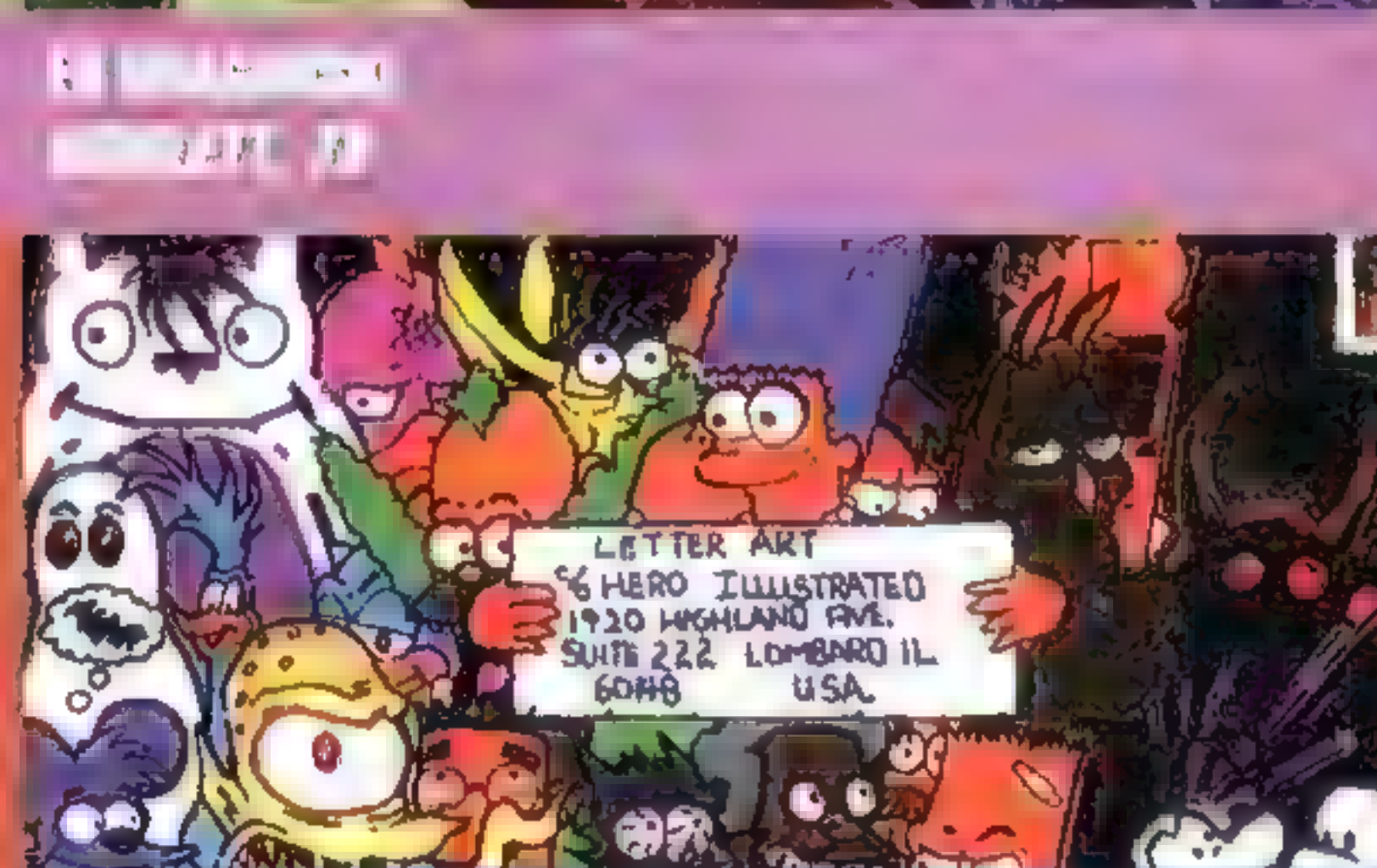
Disney
MARVEL
CROSSOVER
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HERO

ILLUSTRATED



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Illustration by J. O'Barr
 HERO 1994 SPECIAL



Illustration by J. O'Barr
 HERO 1994 SPECIAL

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J. O'BARR



ANTHONY CARPENTER
 GRAND RAPIDS, MI

CARPENTER '94

THE CROW

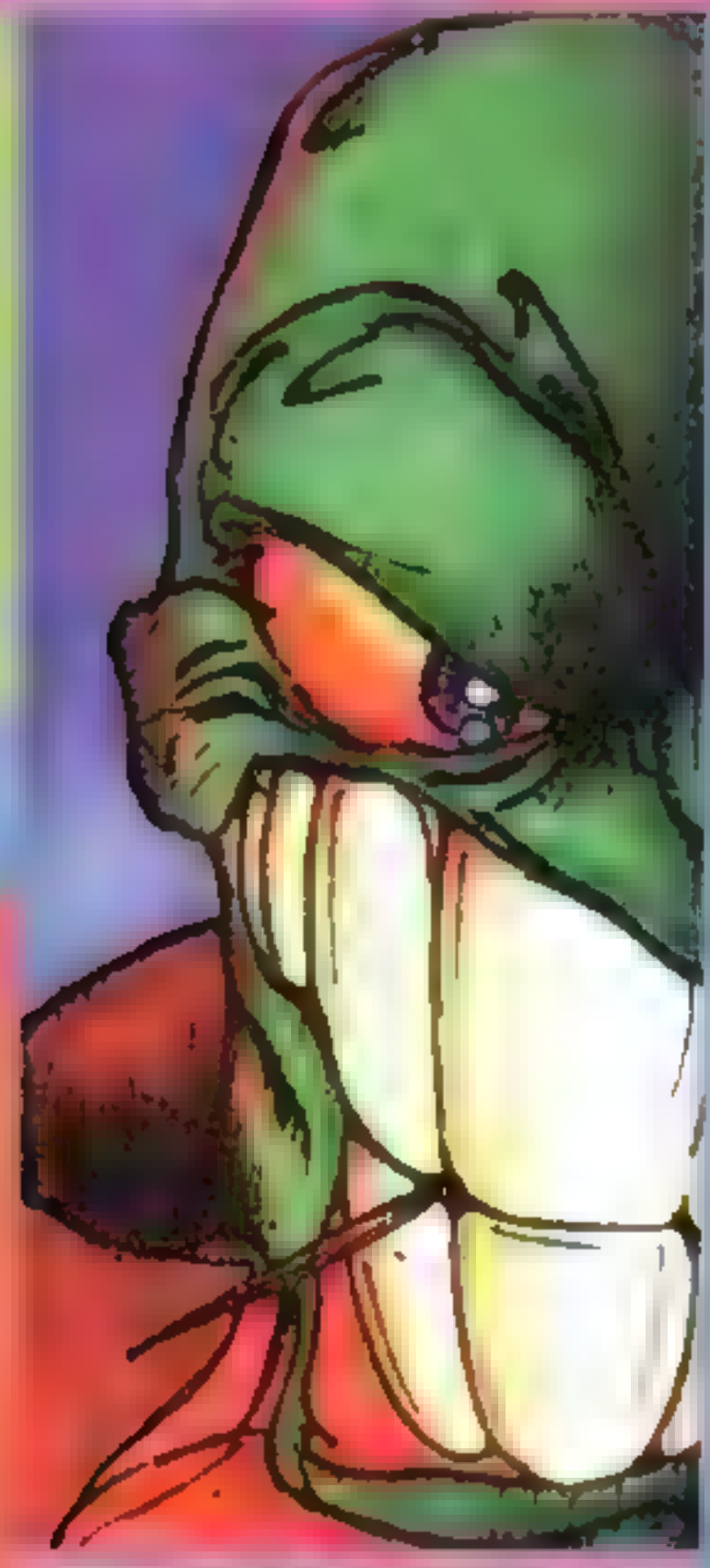


Illustration by J. O'Barr
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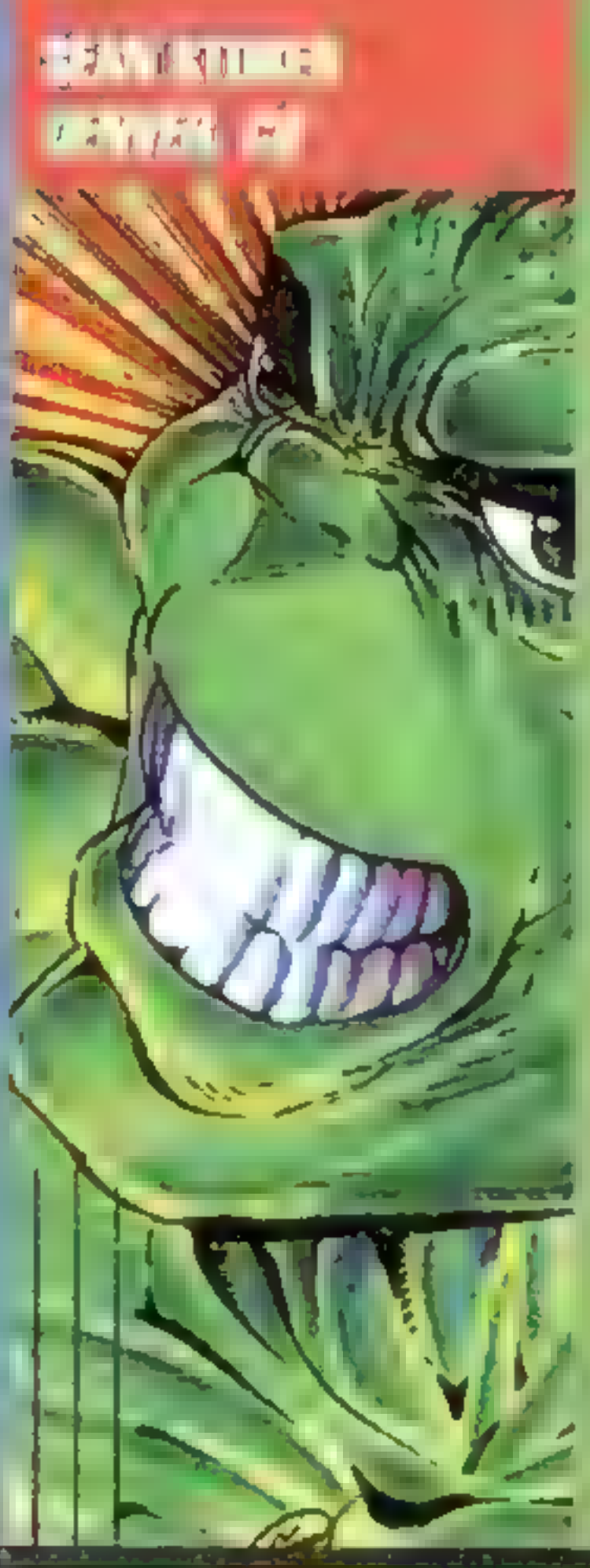
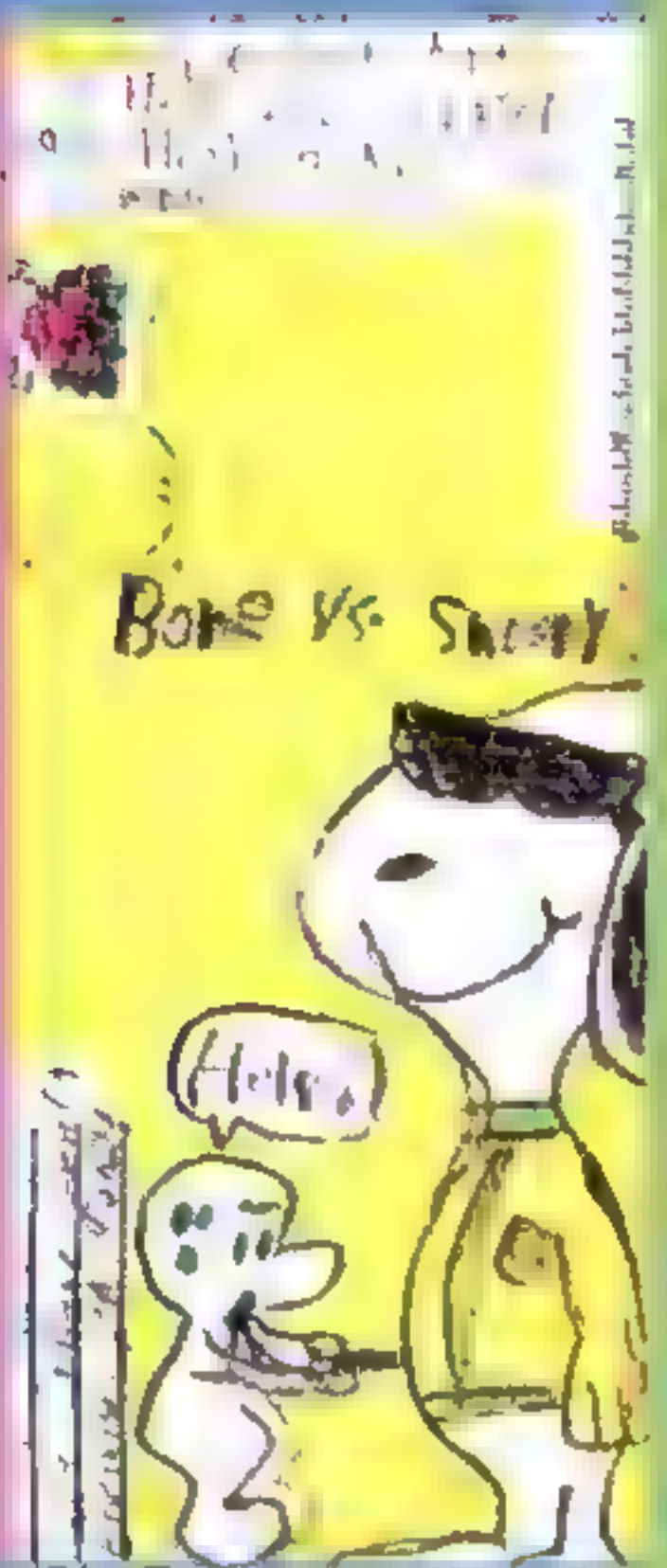


Illustration by J. O'Barr
 HERO 1994 SPECIAL





HERO 1994 SPECIAL

HERO 1994 SPECIAL



HERO 1994 SPECIAL

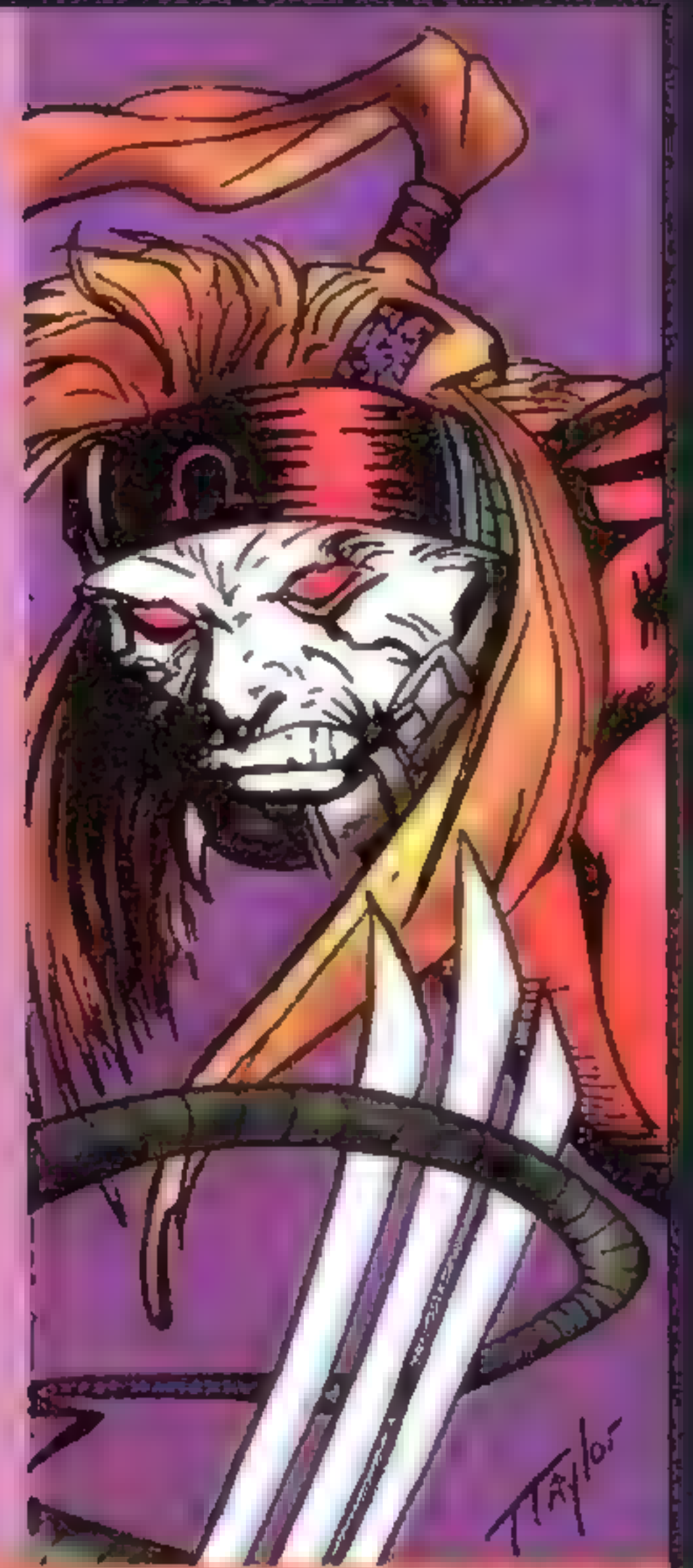


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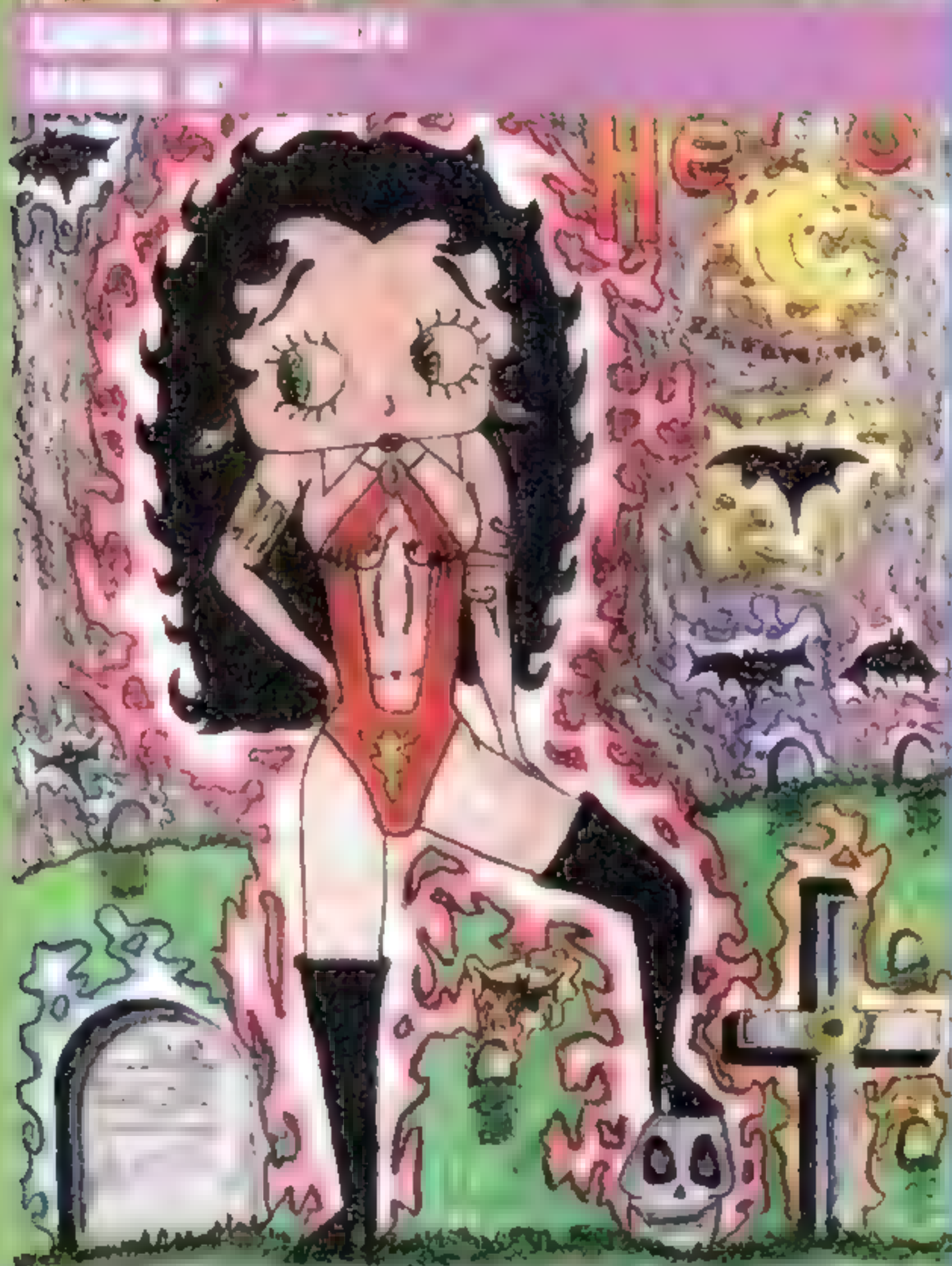




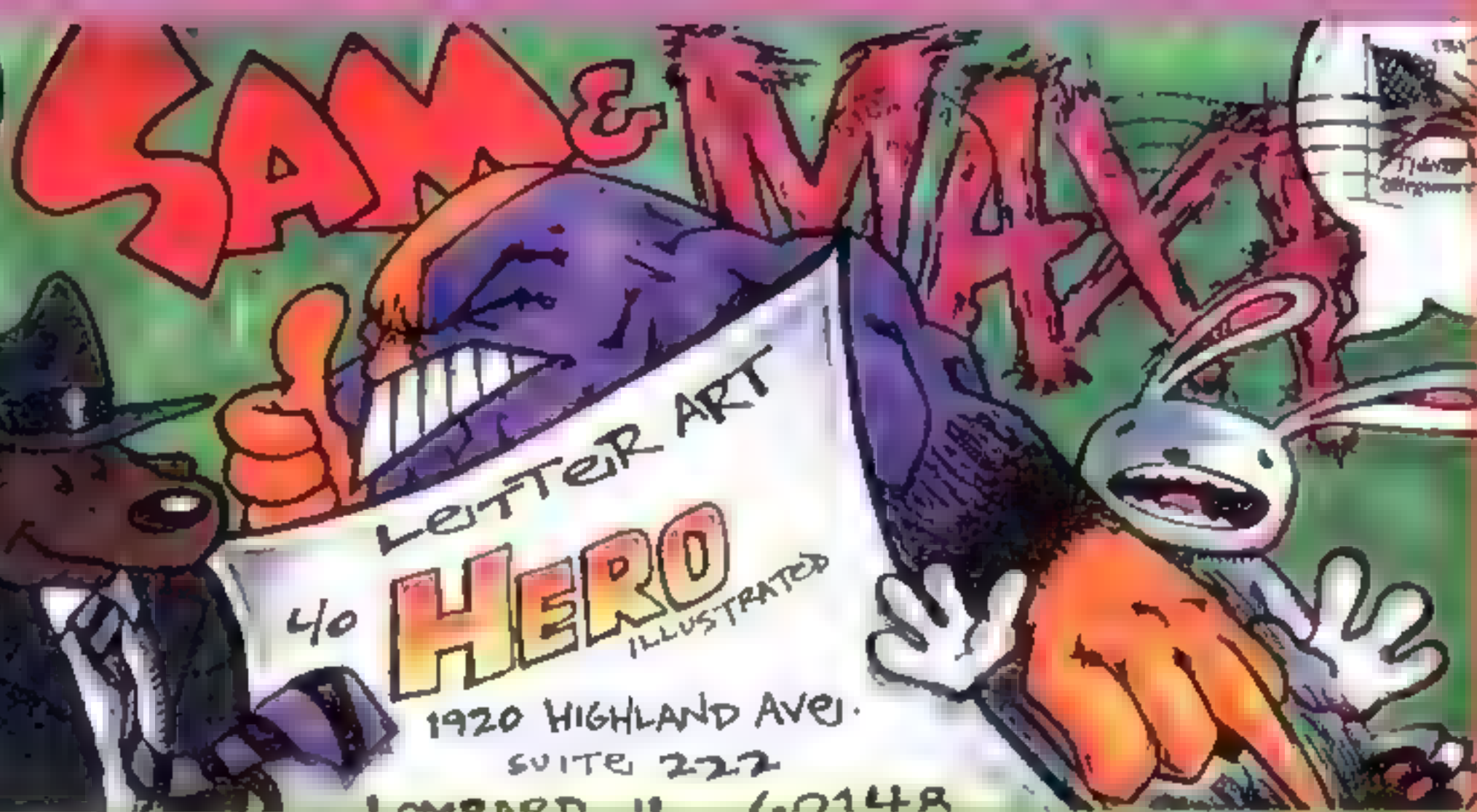
EDWARD DRAGANSKI
ROWLETT, TX



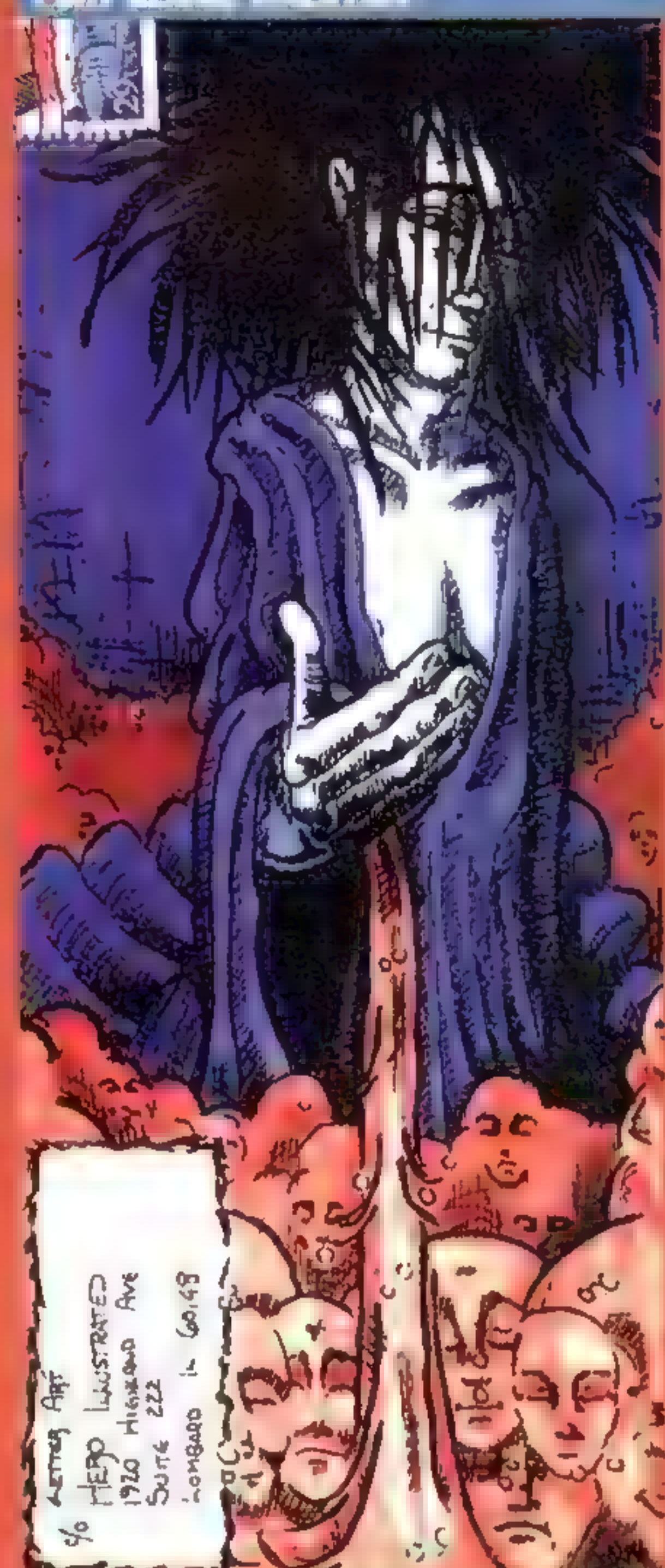
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c/o HERO ILLUSTRATE
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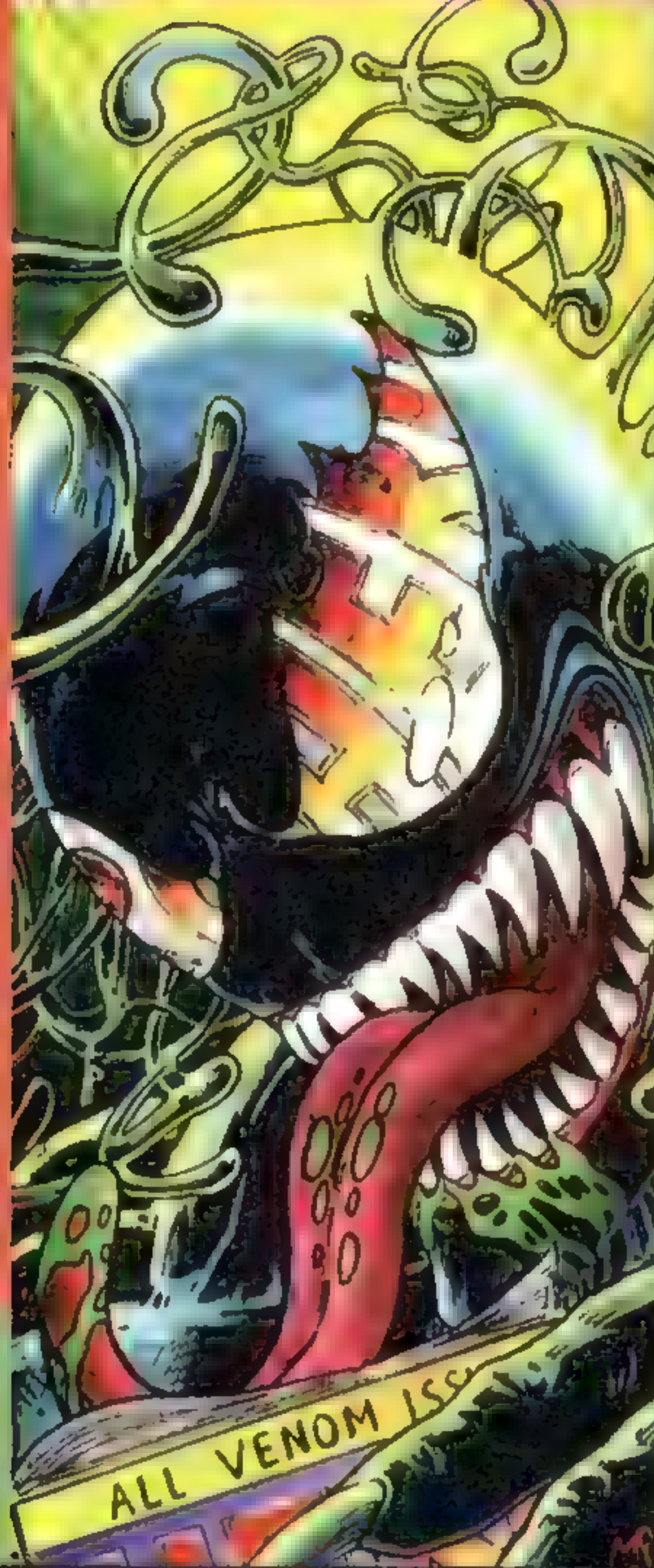
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THE A. BROWN
 THE A. BROWN
 THE A. BROWN





IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING
THOSE WE
LOST IN 1994

COMICS

MURRAY BOLTINOFF

The man responsible for giving comic talents (including Jim Shooter and Neal Adams) their first break died March 6, 1994. Boltinoff entered the world of fiction in 1940 when the newspaper for which he was working closed its doors. Soon thereafter, he found work writing pulp fiction stories for *The Shadow* and *Green Hornet*, and novels (*Buy Me That Town* and *Most Likely to Love*) which went on to become motion pictures. Rejecting a contract from Columbia Pictures in order to stay in New York, Boltinoff's brother introduced him to *Detective Comics'* editorial director, Whitney Ellsworth, and thus began Boltinoff's 45-year career at DC Comics (interrupted briefly by World War II). During his tenure, Boltinoff edited nearly every DC title (most notably *World's Finest* and *The Brave and the Bold*) before retiring in 1986. He has also been credited with co-creating (along with Ramona Fradon) Metamorpho, The Element Man. Boltinoff was 83.

LOUIS-ROBERT CASTERMAN

An important figure in European comic book publishing, Casterman spent four decades at the publishing company owned by his family, and encouraged diversity within his company and in the marketplace. Between 1972 and 1985, he was head of Casterman Publishing's French subsidiary, during which time he founded the popular European comics anthology *A suivre*. Casterman was 74.

ALFRED HARVEY

As the founder of Harvey World Famous Comics, Alfred Harvey's stable of characters—including worldwide favorites such as *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, *Baby Huey*,

Little Dot and *Richie Rich*—have appeared in print and cartoons for more than 50 years. During the 1950s, Harvey was the top publisher in comics. Harvey's legacy will live on not only in comics and animation, but in Hollywood with the live-action *Richie Rich* feature film and an upcoming *Casper the Friendly Ghost* movie. Harvey was 80 years old when he died July 4, in Larchmont, NY.

JOHN MILTON MORRIS

Award-winning political cartoonist John Milton Morris died May 1 of pneumonia in Costa Mesa, CA.



Morris' cartoons chronicled every U.S. president from Franklin D. Roosevelt through Ronald Reagan spanning a 52-year career for the Associated Press. A favorite of Lyndon B. Johnson, eight of Morris' LBJ caricatures hang in the president's library in Texas. Morris was 87.

CHARLES PARIS

During an uninterrupted 26 year career at DC, Paris inked a variety of legendary artists, including Mort Meskin, Carmine Infantino and Ramona Fradon. More impressive still was his 25-year involvement with *Batman*, inking such legendary artists as Dick Sprang, Jack Burnley and Sheldon Moldoff. Paris died March 19 at the age of 82.

Dick Sprang: "At a long ago Chicago Comic Convention, a panel of pencilers deplored the work of their various inkers, and the time factor necessity of needing inkers. Unfortunately, none of them had experienced the pleasure of having Charles Paris ink their work.

"Except for ruled lines, all my inking was done with a brush, and Charlie's inking was brush work, the most versatile tool of all and the toughest to master. On figures and drapery, I inked a fluid, thick and thin line that created a three-dimensional effect. My first pencils for Charley were drawn with this variegated line indicated. I soon saw he didn't need such specific instruction. In his 16 years of inking my large volume of work, he interpreted my intent and enhanced it beautifully. He enhanced my concepts, and I owe *much* of my work's acceptance to Charlie's masterful inking.



IN MEMORIAM

"The Golden Age professionals are passing. Their dedicated, handsome authoritative creativity and craftsmanship lives as our heritage. Charles Paris stands tall and equal with all of them."

NEAL POZNER

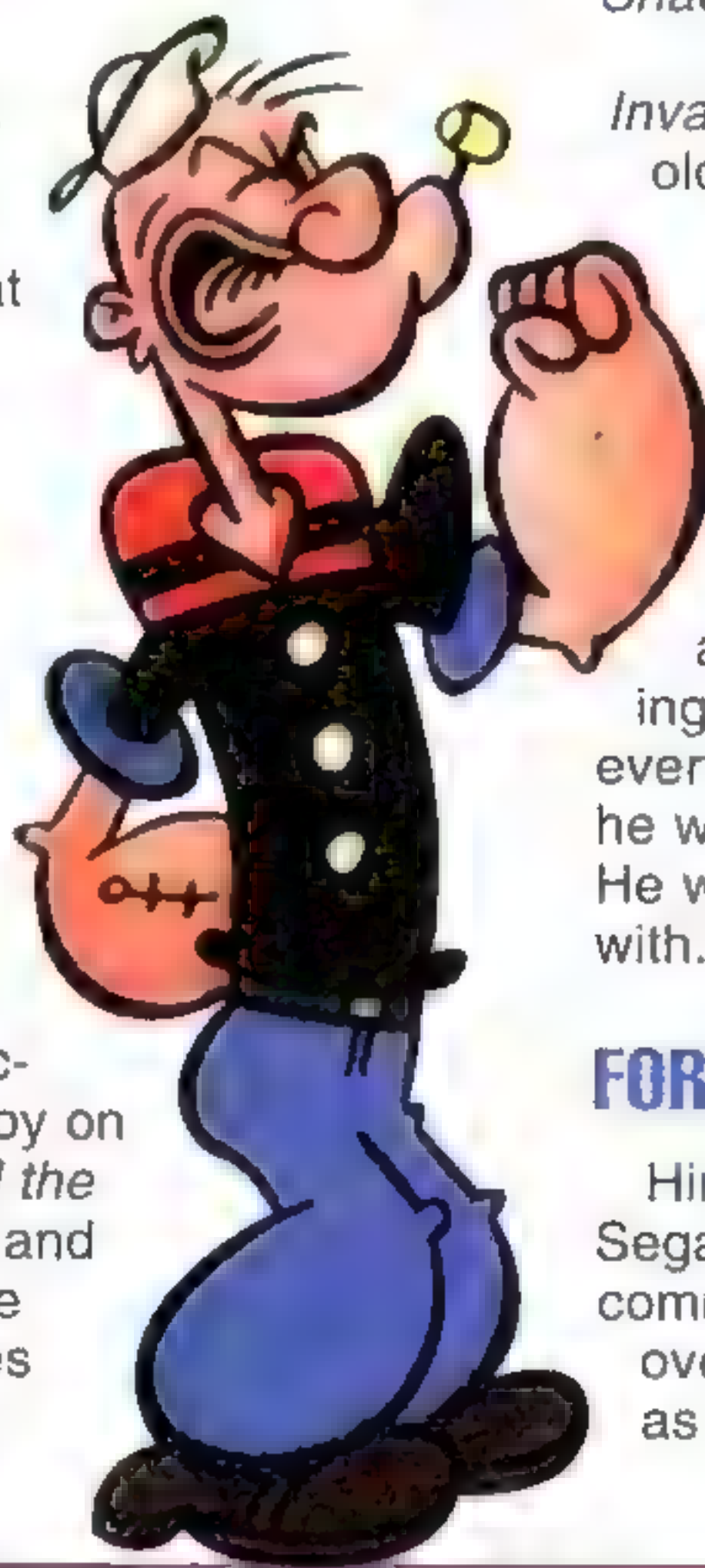
A longtime comics fan, historian and fanzine publisher, Neal Pozner joined DC Comics in 1981 as the industry's first design director. His work on promotional material was groundbreaking for comic book marketing and his design work is also featured on Frank Miller's *Ronin*, the first upscale project from a major publisher. In 1991, Pozner led DC's Creative Services group and could often be found at conventions scouting new talent and offering advice on portfolios. As a writer, Pozner scripted the 1985 *Aquaman* miniseries, which gave the long-running character a new logo and costume. Pozner was 38 years old when he died of an AIDS-related illness on June 21.

FRANK ROBBINS

Comic strip and book illustrator Frank Robbins died Nov. 28 of heart failure in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

Receiving attention for his artistic abilities at a young age, Robbins began working with comic books briefly in 1938 before being asked to take over the *Scorchy Smith* comic strip by Associated Press.

In 1944 he succeeded Jack Kirby on the *Lightnin'* and the *Lone Rider* strip and went on to create the King Features syndicated strip *Johnny Hazard*.



In the early 1970s, Robbins returned to comic books as a writer and artist for DC's *Flash*, *Superboy*, *Batman*, *Detective Comics* and *The Shadow* and Marvel's *Ghost Rider*, *Captain America* and *The Invaders*. Robbins was 77 years old.

Roy Thomas (creator of *The Invaders*): "[Robbins] added so many little touches of his own because he knew the material; he would toss in the right kinds of cars, the right kinds of clothes and hats and things, and I didn't have the excruciating experience of having to Xerox everything because I was afraid that he wasn't going to do any research. He was a real professional to work with."

FOREST "BUD" SAGENDORF

Hired as an assistant to Elzie Segar for Popeye's *Thimble Theater* comic strip in 1930, Sagendorf took over the strip (better known now as *Popeye*) in 1958, adding two



JACK KIRBY

No one has had more influence on comic books and comic book artists today than Jack Kirby. Known as "the King" for his immeasurable contributions to the field, Kirby was responsible for creating (or co-creating) some of comics' most famous characters including Captain America, The Incredible Hulk, The Fantastic Four, The Newsboy Legion, The Boy Commandos, The Challengers of The Unknown, The Inhumans, The New Gods and Etrigan The Demon. His superheroes ushered in the Silver Age of comics and provided the foundation on which Marvel Comics has been built.

Kirby's career began in 1935, drawing frames for *Superman*, *Popeye* and *Betty Boop* cartoons. The next year, he began drawing editorial cartoons for newspapers, eventually moving on to weekly comic strips that included *The Blue Beetle* and *Socko the Seadog*, a daily strip called *The Lone Rider* and eventually, his first comic book, *Wild Boy Magazine*. Then, in December of 1940 *Captain America* hit newsstands with an explosive,

unprecedented artistic style that would become the norm soon after. Kirby's pencil stretched further than the superhero genre; he also worked in monster, Western, war and crime comics, and he (with longtime partner Joe Simon) gave birth to the romance genre in the 1950s with their book *Young Romance*.

Shortly before his death, Kirby explained his characters to *HERO's* Kyle Alexander: "They act just the way real people would in extraordinary situations, that's why my characters are believable. I was drawing people that I knew on the streets of New York and Brooklyn, all the places that I lived. I drew them that way. I had a lot of fights and arguments myself, but I was always on the right side, the hero. Believe me, at that time, people were hero-oriented."

Kirby also played an important role in the creators'-rights movement, especially in 1986 when he publicly butted heads against Marvel Comics in order that he might receive his original artwork. In 1993, his last new creations came to life in Topps' Comics Kirbyverse.

Kirby is survived by his wife, Rosalind, three daughters, one son and two grandchildren. He was 76 years old when he died on Feb. 7.

[ED. NOTE: After Jack's death in February, there were a number of tributes presented in *HERO* #10. One of the most appropriate came from Jack's one-time assistant and long-time friend, writer Mark Evanier. We're proud to present it once again]:

"Jack was one of the most—let's strike that—the most giving person I

ever met in my life. He was totally accessible to anyone, from the youngest comic fan to the seasoned professional. Even though for most of his of his life he was committed to an absolute killer work schedule, he always found time to talk to anybody who'd want to speak to him, to anyone who wanted to interview him, to anyone who wanted to make contact with this artist and writer who had so stimulated their lives."

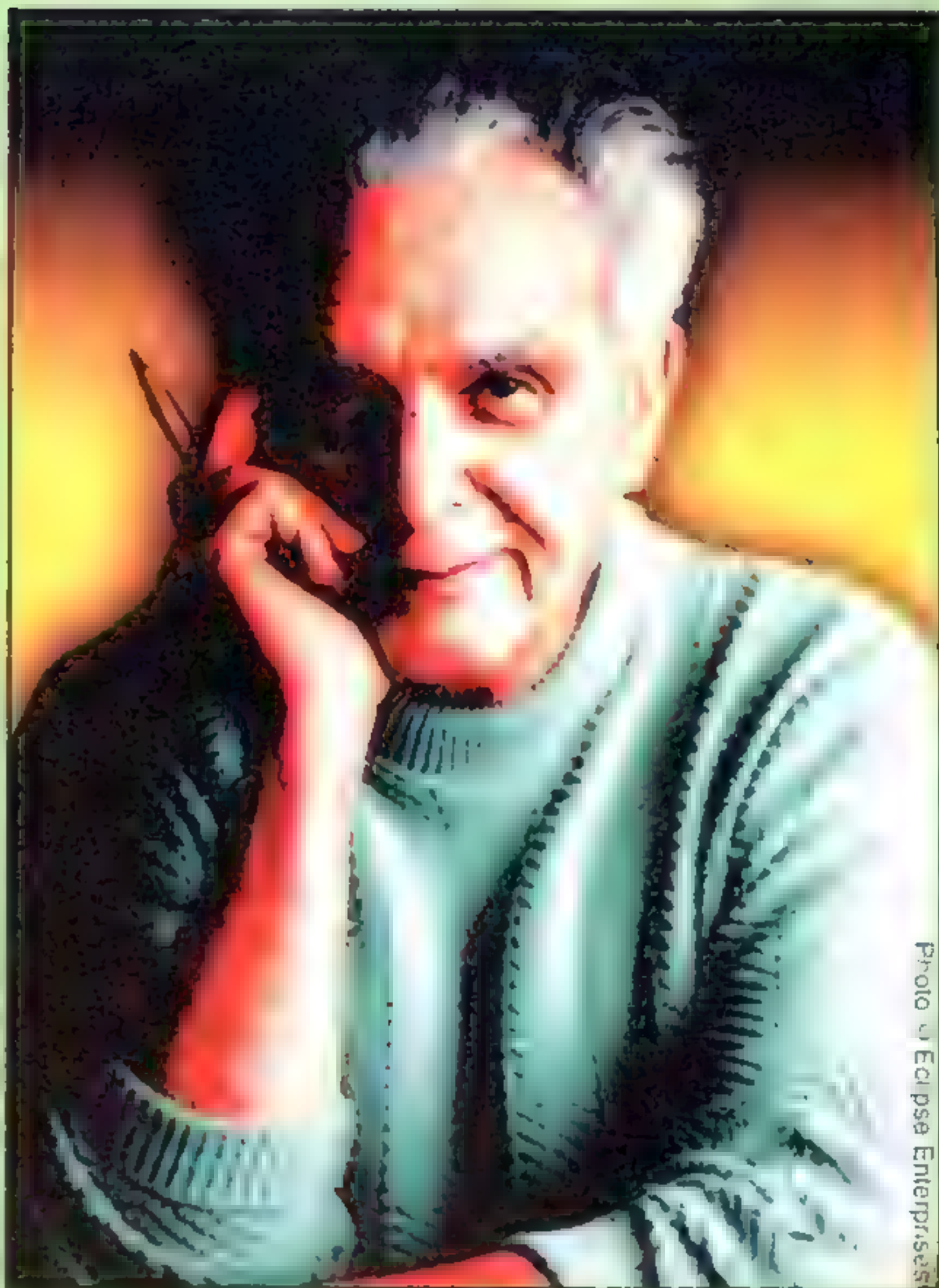


Photo © Eclipse Enterprises



IN

MEMORIAM

new characters, Dufus and Granny. Sagendorf continued to write and draw the Sunday color strip until his death last Sept. 22. Sagendorf was 79 years old.

DON THOMPSON

Don Thompson, one of the most influential fan press editors in the comics industry, died May 23. Thompson, a former newspaper editor, was one of the earliest editors of SF and comics fan publications. He co-edited (with Dick Lupoff) two notable

comics reference books, *All In Color For A Dime* and *The Comic-Book Book*. In 1982, he and his wife Maggie (also a longtime comics enthusiast) took over as co-editors of *Comics Buyer's Guide*, a weekly trade magazine/fan publication. Thompson wrote editorials and reviews for *CBG* until his death, in a style he suggested was "easy to read, so that some, at least, will choose to read what I have written." One of his more often used catch-phrases for books he didn't care for was, "If you like this sort of thing, then here it is." Thompson was 58.

DOUG WILDEY

The creator of the classic cartoon series *Jonny Quest*, Doug Wildey's career in comics and animation spanned five decades. His first big break was drawing the *Saint* daily newspaper strip. In the 1940s and 50's, he worked for DC and Atlas (which became Timely, which became Marvel), drawing, among other things, *The Outlaw Kid*. In the 1960s he moved into animation, where his credits include *Jonny Quest* and *Space Ghost* (in collaboration with Alex Toth). When Comico published a *Jonny* series in the mid-'80s, Wildey's friend Diana Schutz persuaded him to contribute a few covers, and even a few stories. One of his last, and finest, contributions to the comics medium was *Rio*, an epic of the Old West that appeared in *Eclipse Monthly* and at Epic (in *Rio Rides Again*). Wildey was col-

laborating on a live-action version of *Jonny Quest* when he died on Oct. 5. He was 72.

Diana Schutz: "Doug always said that life was a party. He certainly was blessed with a great talent, and he used it every day of his life; didn't let it go to waste. That's a hell of a legacy to leave behind."

RADIO, TELEVISION, FILM

CAB CALLOWAY

Calloway was a popular Harlem bandleader in the 1920s when he was tapped by the Fleischer Brothers to make animation history by "performing" his hit "Minnie The Moocher," in a *Betty Boop* cartoon. He later did another *Boop* cartoon, this time performing "St. James Infirmary." Other Calloway hits include "Jumpin' Jive," "San Francisco Fan" and "Jiveformation Please." (The latter was named after the popular radio program *Information Please*.) Calloway brought "Minnie" to a new generation in 1980 when he performed the song in the film *The Blues Brothers*. He was 86.

JOHN CANDY

One of the most likeable celebrities on and off camera, Candy's good-natured humor and immense popularity (on television in *SCTV* and in such films as *Stripes*, *Uncle Buck* and *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*) spilled over into comic books with *Camp Candy*, a 1990 series from Marvel Comics, based on the short-lived animated television show of the same name.

A playful man who loved to do characters—such as polka leader Yash Shmenge and TV personality



Johnny La Rue—Candy's career also included a spoof of the science-fiction genre with his portrayal of Barf, a mog (half man/half dog), in Mel Brooks' *Spaceballs*. At the time of his death, Candy was in the process of shopping around a comedy/variety show called *Live From the Moon*. Candy was 43 when he died in Mexico on March 4.

Dave Thomas (co-starred with Candy on *SCTV*): "I loved him, and I miss him, and I think about him all the time. I guess the thing that bothers me most is that I can't phone him.... He brightened up my life for the time that he was here. When I started on stage with John, in the mid-'70s, when I came out on stage with [him], half the battle was already over, because the audience already sort of liked you because they liked him—his big, chubby, loveable face ... all you have to do is be funny after that, you don't have to win them over—they already like you. [It's] everybody's loss."

WILLIAM CONRAD

William Conrad got his start in radio in the late 1940s, appearing regularly on *Suspense* and *Escape* before taking the role of Matt Dillon on the radio version of *Gunsmoke*. In the 1970s and '80s, he starred on



television in the long-running series *Cannon* and *Jake and the Fatman*. Perhaps his most enduring role, however, was as the hyperdriven narrator of *The Bullwinkle Show*. He was 73 years old when he died Feb. 11 in North Hollywood, CA.

June Foray: "Jay [Ward] and Bill Scott [producers of *The Bullwinkle Show*] knew whom they wanted to hire, so we didn't have to voice test, and he wanted Bill Conrad to be the announcer. The first show that we recorded, Bill came in with these stentorian tones—you know he had a beautiful singing voice, as well as a speaking voice—and he would come in and say "Now, we find Rocky and Bullwinkle..." in these stentorian tones with a great diapason and Jay said, "Oh, you gotta go faster," because of the

rapid-fire delivery that we had. So he would talk a little faster, and every time he talked a little faster, his voice would get a little higher. Finally Jay said "You gotta go faster, Bill! You gotta keep up with the actors!"

"Bill said, 'But I sound hysterical!' Jay said, 'That's precisely it!'

"He was always very sober, and ... people would say, 'Gee, he's nasty and mean!' and so forth, because he had that exterior, but he really wasn't. He was a softie inside."

PETER CUSHING

Despite his roles in movies ranging from Laurel & Hardy's *Two Chumps At Oxford* to *Dr. Who vs. The Daleks*, Cushing left his greatest mark on cinema with his work at Hammer Studios. Hammer took a chance when they reinvented the horror genre in the mid-'50s and with the shocking *Curse of Frankenstein* and *Dracula* (called *Horror of Dracula* in the U.S.). The studio made stars out of Cushing and Christopher Lee (creating a team that gave Karloff and Lugosi a run for its money). His Frankenstein may be one of the most sophisticated, complicated and thoughtful interpretations of evil ever brought to film, while his Van Helsing was heroic, dynamic and made intelligence and knowledge something all should strive for. He

proved his versatility by playing Sherlock Holmes in Hammer's underappreciated version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. In the '70s, long after the heyday of



Hammer, Cushing was chilling a new generation as the villainous Grand Moff Tarkin in *Star Wars*. By all accounts, he was a great actor and a kind, gentle person. Cushing was 81.

FRANCIS GIFFORD

Gifford left her biggest mark on Hollywood—and comics—with her performance of Nyoka, the title role in the 1941 serial *Jungle Girl*. (The character later came to comics and is currently published by AC.) Gifford's other movies include *Tarzan Triumphs* (as Zandra from Polyandra) and Arch Oboler's under-rated *The Arnelo Affair*. Gifford was 74.

RAUL JULIA

Best known to comics fans for his portrayal of Gomez Addams in the film versions of the Addams Family comic strip, actor Raul Julia died Oct. 24 in Manhasset, NY. Discovered in a San Juan nightclub in 1964, Julia's career included such films as



IN MEMORIAM

Kiss of the Spiderwoman and *The Threepenny Opera*. The final performance of his 30-year stage and screen career was as General Bison in the video game-based, action-adventure film *Street Fighter*.

Thousands lined the streets of San Juan during Julia's state funeral. He was 54 when he died.

WALTER LANTZ

Animator Lantz created the cartoon classics Woody Woodpecker and Andy Panda and made more than 800 cartoon shorts during his career, over a quarter of which unleashed his hyperactive woodpecker with the contagious laugh.

Lantz's contributions to his craft began with Hearst Newspapers' new animation division when he was 16. After only two years of animating comic strips such as the Katzenjammer Kids and Krazy Kat,



Lantz was promoted to animator status and then began working for Universal Pictures' cartoon studio.

Setting the stage for the creator-owned movement going on today, Lantz's then unprecedented agreement with Universal granted him complete ownership of his creations. Woody Woodpecker debuted in an Andy Panda short in 1940, and "The Woody Woodpecker Song" was nominated for the best song Academy Award in 1948.

In 1979, three years after retiring, Lantz was honored with the Academy's lifetime achievement award for his contributions to animation and was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1986.

Lantz was 93 when he died of heart disease on March 22.

HENRY MANCINI

A Grammy and Oscar-winning composer, Mancini is best remembered for his many compositions for television and film, including the themes from *Peter Gunn* and *Newhart*, the classic "Moon River," (from *Breakfast At Tiffany's*) and the theme from *The Pink Panther*, which became a staple of both the film series and the Saturday-morning cartoon (a show on which Mancini himself made a guest appearance). Mancini was 70.

GEORGE PEPPARD

As the cigar-chomping Hannibal Smith, George Peppard led his team of vigilantes convicted of crimes they did not commit into millions of homes via NBC television's *The A-Team*. At the height of its popularity, the cartoonish series was even adapted by Marvel Comics. He also had the daunting task of co-starring with Audrey Hepburn in the classic film

Breakfast At Tiffany's. Peppard was 65.

CESAR ROMERO

One of the first losses of 1994 was venerable film and television actor Cesar Romero. Romero's film debut came in 1934's *The Thin Man*, but he will be remembered best by comics fans as The Joker on the Batman television series of the '60s. As the Joker, Romero struck fear into the hearts of Gotham citizens with his outrageous clothes, painted face and dastardly deeds. In spite of the painted face, Romero always refused to shave his trademark mustache, leaving producers to cover it with makeup or find another actor. Romero was 86 years old when he died on Jan. 1.

RAYMOND SCOTT

Raymond Scott was a musical jack-of-all-trades, but fans of the old Warner Bros. cartoons will remember him as the composer of "New Year's Eve in a Haunted House," and the classic "Dinner Music for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals," which were among many Scott compositions adapted for the cartoons by Warner Bros. musical director Carl Stalling. More recently, his music has been featured on Nickelodeon's *Ren & Stimpy Show*. Scott was also an accomplished inventor of musical

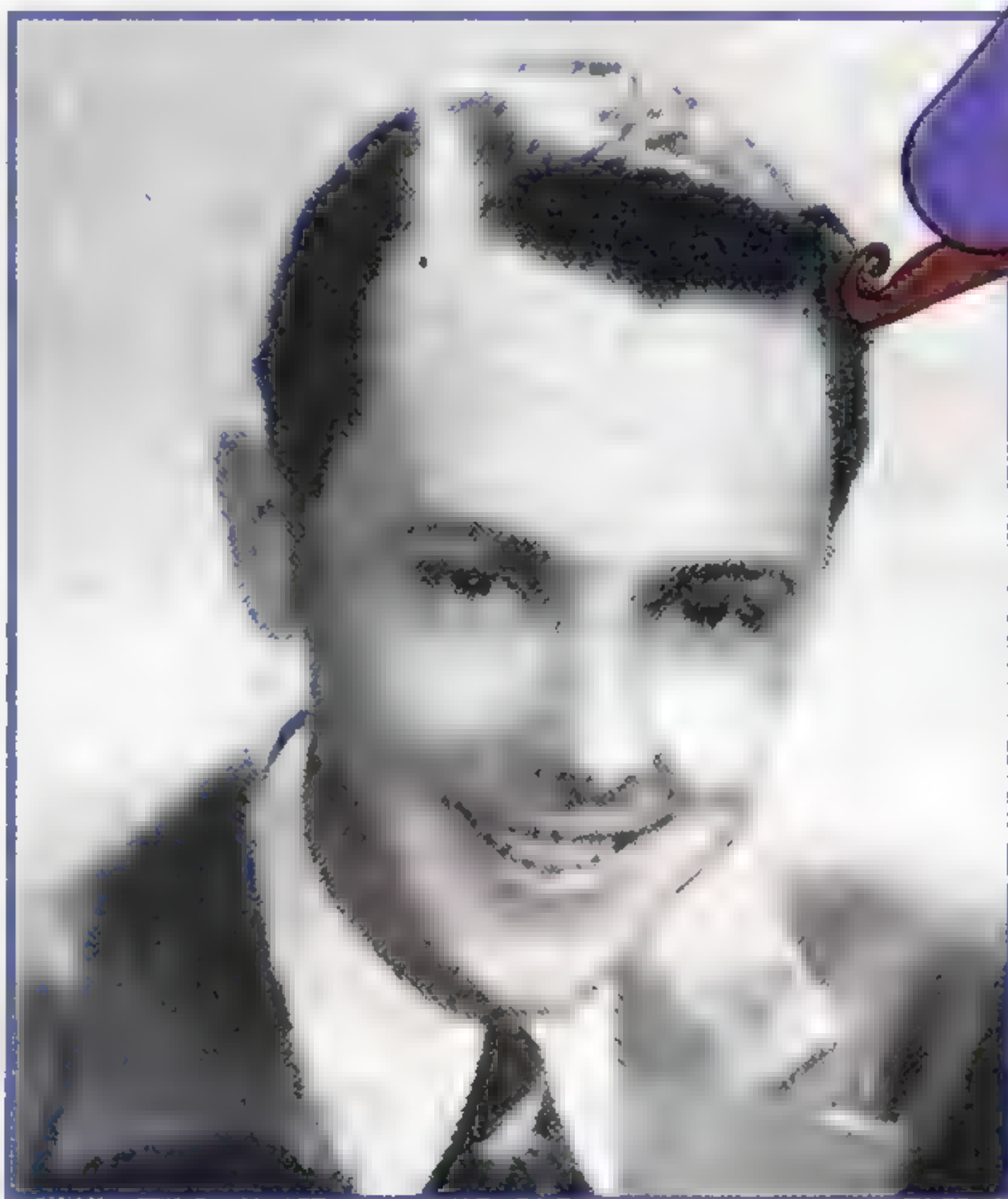




instruments, including an early model of the modern synthesizer. During the 1950s, he was the band-leader on the television version of *Your Hit Parade*, and during the 1970s, he served for seven years as head of Motown Records' electronic music division. Scott was recently the subject of two compilation/tribute albums, *The Music of Raymond Scott: Reckless Nights and Turkish Twilights* and *The Carl Stalling Project*, which featured a liberal dose of Scott's work. Scott was 85.

OLAN SOULE

A veteran radio actor (whose credits included *Jack Armstrong*, *The All-American Boy* and the long-running *First Nighter* program), Soule entertained a whole new generation in the 1970s and 1980s



as the voice of Batman (and later, the voice of Martin Stein, Firestorm's older half) on Hanna-Barbera's many incarnations of the *Super Friends*



He appeared in front of the camera as the choir master on *The Andy Griffith Show*, in a variety of roles on Jack Webb's *Dragnet* and in a brief, but memorable, scene as an auctioneer in Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*. Soule was 84.

FRANK WELLS

Wells became the president of Walt Disney Company after working for Warner Bros., and he oversaw the magic kingdom's resurgence in animation with the releases of *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin*. Wells was killed in a helicopter crash while vacationing in Nevada. He was 62.

IN MEMORIAM

AND THE REST...

ROBERT BLOCH

Bloch became a professional writer at the age of 17, when he sold a story to *Weird Tales* Magazine. He is best remembered for the novel *Psycho*, which Alfred Hitchcock brought to the screen in 1960. As a writer for television and film, his credits

include episodes of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Night Gallery*, *Tales From The Darkside* and the famous "Catspaw" episode of *Star Trek*. Bloch was 77.

Harlan Ellison: "It's chillier here, now. The light to read by, it's too dim."

"We talked many times between the day he learned he was going to die, and the night of Sept. 23, when he left. Face to face, and over the phone. I knew him since I was 16 years old; we became friends in May of 1951, at Beatley's On-The-Lake Hotel just outside Bellafontaine, Ohio; we stayed friends for 43 years. Not once-in-a-while friends or "I'll call you when I get to town" friends or "We really must get together" friends, but close and regular chums. He was the exemplar of what my father told me a man should strive to be: a *mensch*. There is no higher accolade. He was a *mensch*. His photo is in the dictionary under the definition of a class act.

"I sat on the stairs and spoke his name, and I cried for myself because I had lost another friend.

"Three nights before he left, I called to check in, and Ellie said he wanted to talk to me. I hadn't expected that. The day before, he had been in bad shape, couldn't speak, sat propped up on pillows on the bed, terribly thin and pale, his head down, eyes closed. I hadn't expected him to

be able to talk to me. But he got on, and it was 20 years ago! No huskiness, no hesitation, no rambling sentences, it was Bob, back again. And we talked for 20 minutes. We talked about his typewriters, the Olympia office standard machines we hadn't been able to get repaired because the world was intent on converting everyone to electronic junkware. We often talked about how annoying it was that commercial interests brainwashed everyone into believing they had to have this or that new toot 'n' whistle, when the technology we used was already perfect for us ... and the concomitant need for those who had been flummoxed into *buying* the new junkware to ridicule those who chose not to go along with the game. And I told Bob I had a guy who did great repairs, and I'd come over and pick up the three Olympias and I'd take them along with one of my own six, when I went to see Jesus Silva this week. He said that would be grand.

"Never to see his face again, that grin. It's hard, it's really tough. There is a picture of us together, on that street in Ohio in 1951. He is three times my height, and 1,000 times my presence. I am a kid, and he has his arm around my shoulders. And we were friends. It is tough, boy, you just don't know." [© 1994 by The Kilimanjaro Corporation.]

CHARLES BUKOWSKI

A writer with a gift for showing the gritty underbelly of society mostly from first-hand observation and experience, Bukowski wrote about how he lived. His poetry and novels dealt with topics such as loneliness, sex and alcoholism culminating in his screenplay and film *Barfly* (starring Mickey Rourke and Faye Dunaway), which won critical praise. Among Bukowski's comic endeavors, the most notable were two collaborations with Robert Crumb entitled *Bring Me Your Love* and *There's No Business*.

Bukowski was 73 when he died March 9.

HARRY NILSSON

A well-known singer and songwriter, Nilsson first made a splash in 1969 when he sang "Everybody's

Talkin'" for the film *Midnight Cowboy*. He racked up a string of hits in the 1970s, most notably his version of Badfinger's "Without You." Comic fans may remember him as the songwriter for Robert Altman's film *Popeye*. Nilsson was 52.

MICHAEL O'DONOGHUE

As the co-creator of *National Lampoon* and one of the first writers on *Saturday Night Live*, O'Donoghue inspired a generation with his bleak, dark, "slash-and-burn" humor. In addition to his intermittent role as Mr. Mike, purveyor of the world's least-loved bedtime stories, he was also responsible for "The Claudine Longet Ski Invitational," and "*Star Trek: The Last Voyage of the Starship Enterprise*." He later co-wrote the 1988 film *Scrooged*. O'Donoghue was 54.

Ty Templeton (creator, *Stig's Inferno*; writer, *Batman Adventures*): "If the last 30 years had a singular champion for the humor of cruelty, Michael O'Donoghue was it. Probably my favorite comics story he did was a thing called "Blazing Defeat Comics" in *National Lampoon*. It was the story of four tough-as-nails American GIs who go to Vietnam and over the space of about a half-dozen pages, fall further and further into despair and chemical abuse until at last, they're killed in an explosion in the Saigon bar where they were all trying to get drunk. It was drawn like a *Sgt. Fury* comic and it was one of the most honestly funny things I've ever read.

"He liked to joke about maiming bunnies and poisoning your parents and underwear for the deaf. No matter what he did, you only had a choice of two responses: either you got so offended you had to go and have a wash or you laughed until you could not breathe. There was no middle ground. That was Mr. Mike.

"Now that he's dead, I think we should remember him, not as one of the leading humorists of the leading half of the 20th century, but as a short little man with tiny shoulders, a weak chin and a hair loss problem. At least that way it all makes sense." ▲

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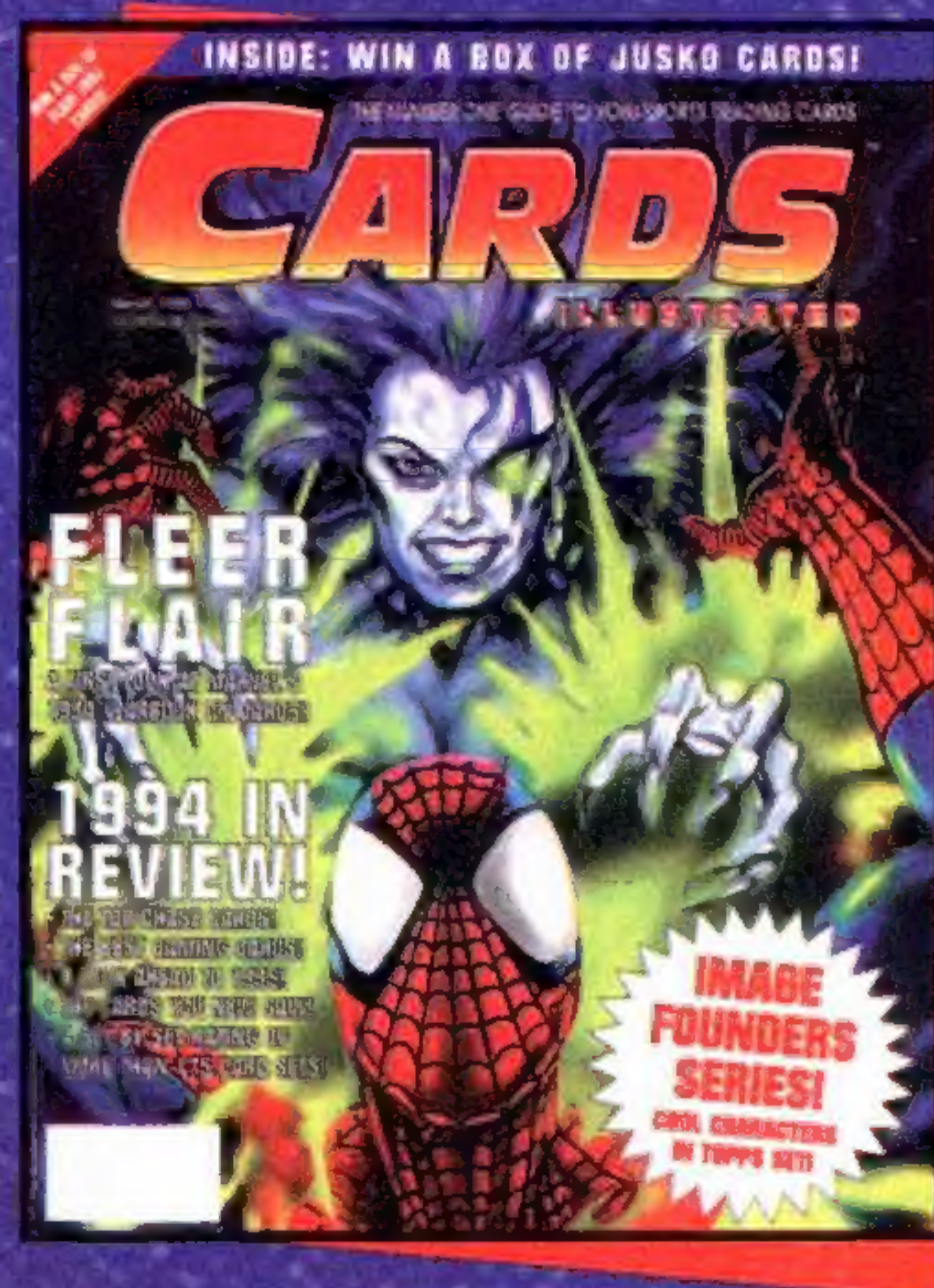
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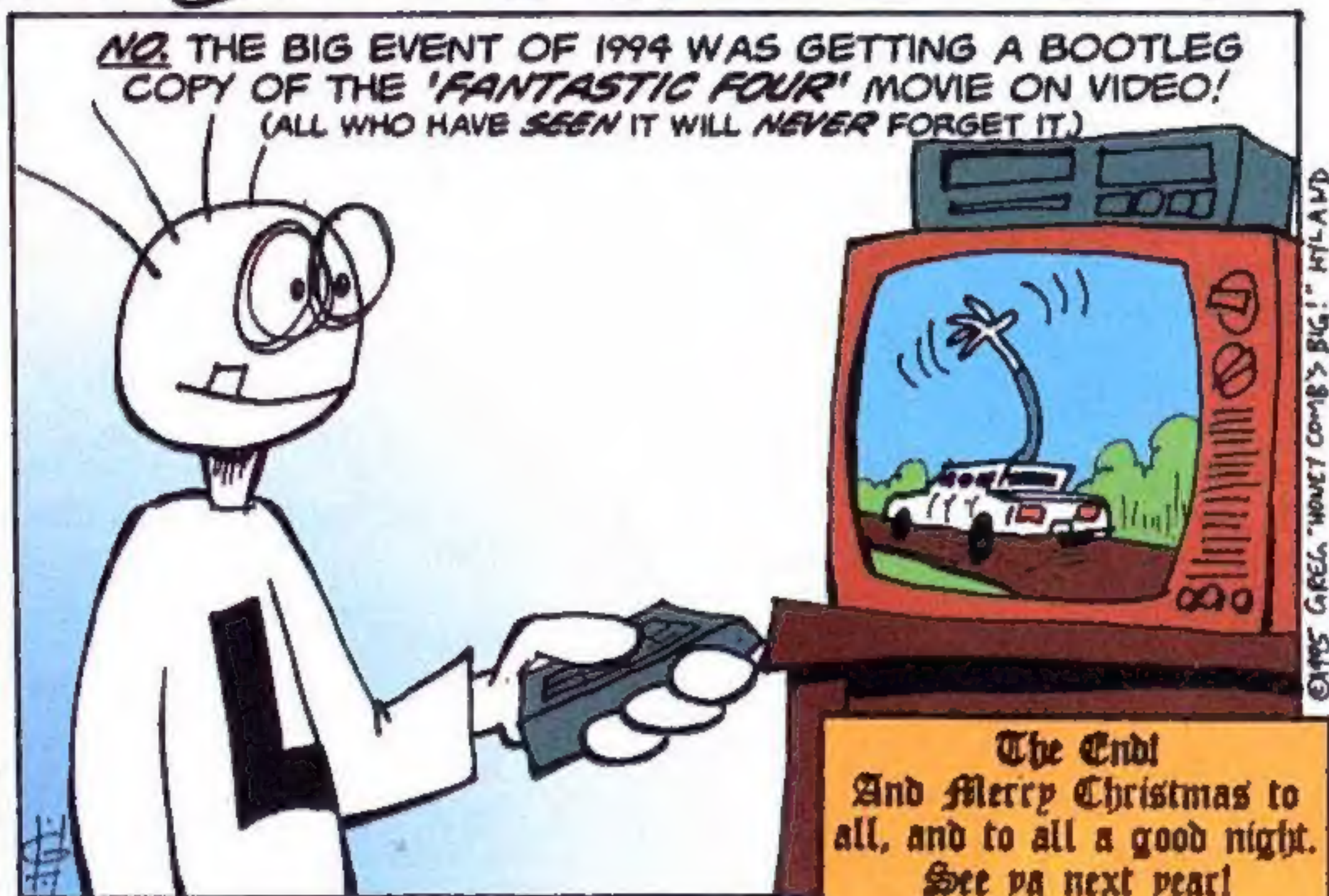
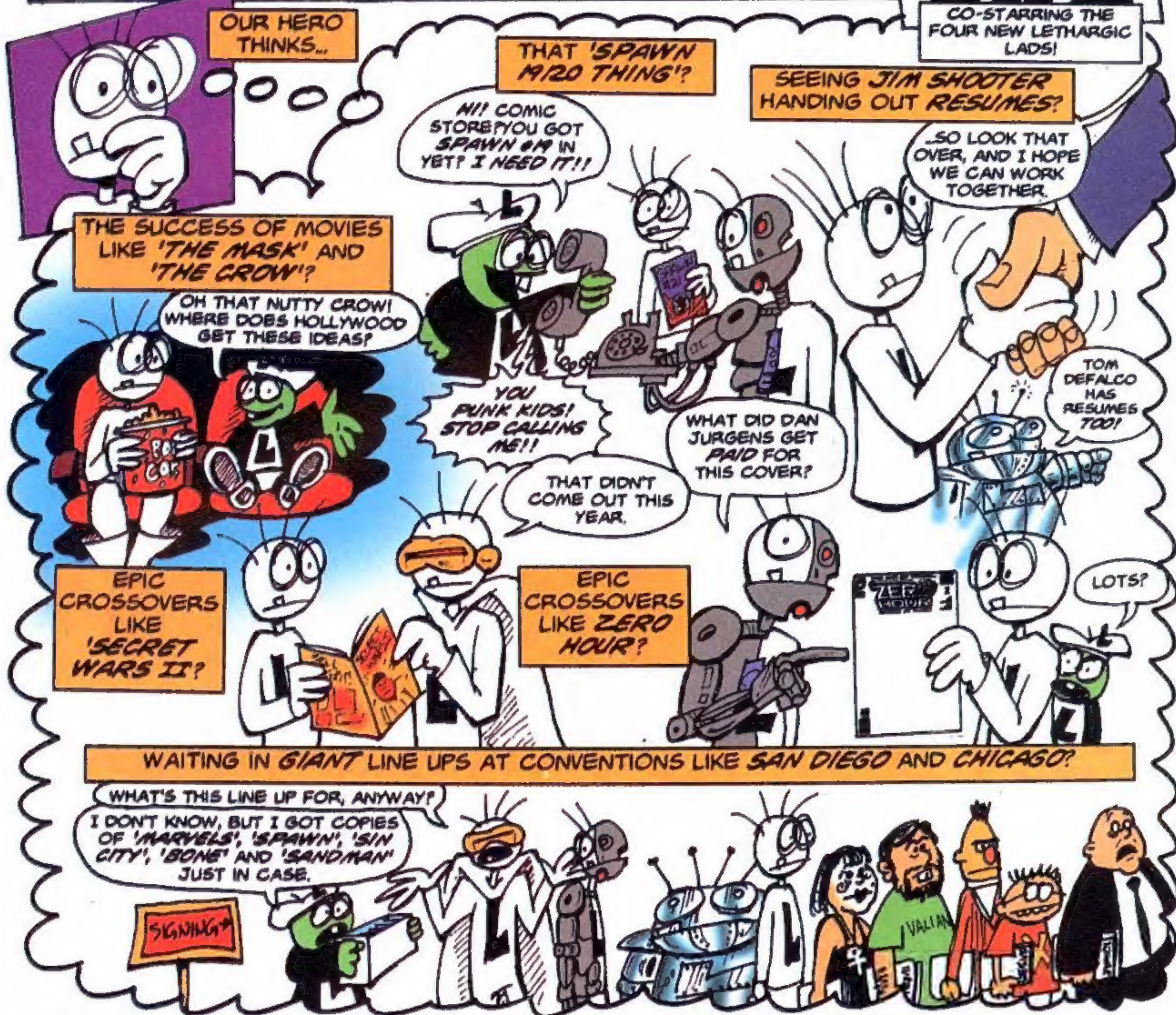
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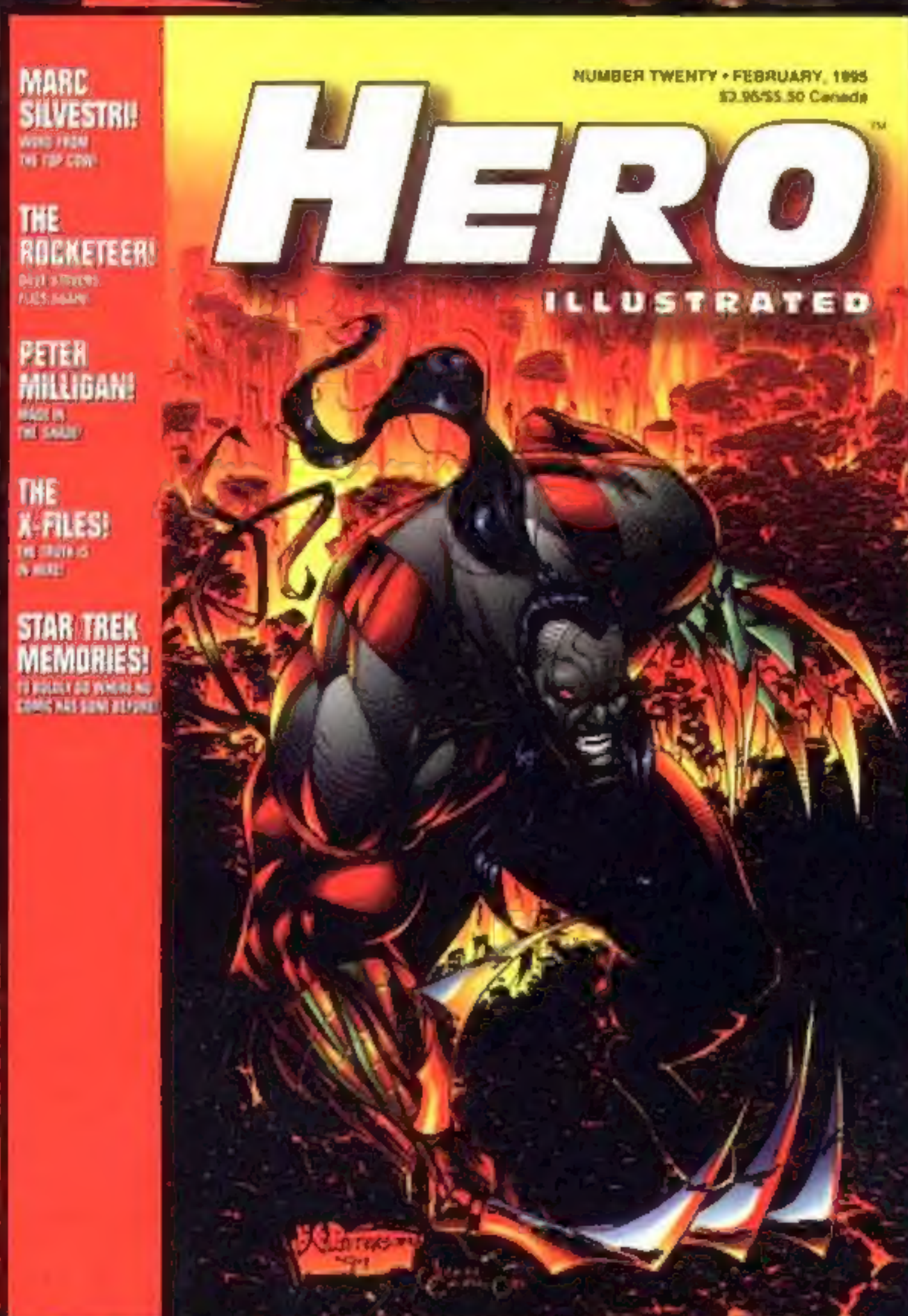
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